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EVELYN INNES. BY GEORGE MOORE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

TAUCHNITZ EDITION.

By the same Author,

CELIBATES . . . . .	1 vol.
SISTER TERESA . . . . .	2 vols.
THE UNTILLED FIELD . . . . .	1 vol.

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# EVELYN INNES

BY

GEORGE MOORE,  
AUTHOR OF "CELIBATES," ETC. ETC.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LEIPZIG

BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1898.



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TO

ARTHUR SYMONS AND W. B. YEATS

TWO CONTEMPORARY WRITERS

WITH WHOM

I AM IN SYMPATHY.

1961879



## EVELYN INNES.

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### I.

THE thin winter day had died early, and at four o'clock it was dark night in the long room in which Mr. Innes gave his concerts of early music. An Elizabethan virginal had come to him to be repaired, and he had worked all the afternoon, and when overtaken by the dusk, he had impatiently sought a candle end, lit it, and placed it so that its light fell upon the jacks. . . . Only one more remained to be adjusted. He picked it up, touched the quill and dropped it into its place, rapidly tuned the instrument, and ran his fingers over the keys.

Iron-grey hair hung in thick locks over his forehead, and, shining through their shadows, his eyes drew attention from the rest of his face, so that none noticed at first the small and firmly cut nose, nor the scanty growth of beard twisted to a point by a movement habitual to the weak, white hand. His face was in his eyes: they reflected the flame of faith and of mission; they were the eyes of one whom fate had thrown on an obscure wayside of dreams, the face of a dreamer and propagandist of old-time music and its instruments. He

sat at the virginal, like one who loved its old design and sweet tone, in such strict keeping with the music he was playing—a piece by W. Byrd, “John, come kiss me now”—and when it was finished, his fingers strayed into another, “Nancie,” by Thomas Morley. His hands moved over the keyboard softly, as if they loved it, and his thoughts, though deep in the gentle music, entertained casual admiration of the sixteenth century organ, which had lately come into his possession, and which he could see at the end of the room on a slightly raised platform. Its beautiful shape, and the shape of the old instruments, vaguely perceived, lent an enchantment to the darkness. In the corner was a viola da gamba, and against the walls a harpsichord and a clavichord.

Above the virginal on which Mr. Innes was playing there hung a portrait of a woman, and, happening to look up, a sudden memory came upon him, and he began to play an aria out of *Don Giovanni*. But he stopped before many bars, and holding the candle end high, so that he could see the face, continued the melody with his right hand. To see her lips and to strike the notes was almost like hearing her sing it again. Her voice came to him through many years, from the first evening he had heard her sing at La Scala. Then he was a young man spending a holiday in Italy, and she had made his fortune for the time by singing one of his songs. They were married in Italy, and at the end of some months they had gone to Paris and to Brussels, where Mrs. Innes had engagements to fulfil. It was in Brussels that she had lost her voice. For a long while it was believed that she might recover it, but these hopes proved illusory, and, in trying to regain what she had

lost irrevocably, the money she had earned dwindled to a last few hundred pounds. The Innes had returned to London, and, with a baby-daughter, settled in Dulwich. Mr. Innes accepted the post of organist at St. Joseph's, the parish church in Southwark, and Mrs. Innes had begun her singing classes.

Her reputation as a singer favoured her, and an aptitude for teaching enabled her to maintain, for many years, a distinguished position in the musical world. Mr. Innes's abilities contributed to their success, and he might have become a famous London organist if he had devoted himself to the instrument. But one day seeing in a book the words "viola d'amore," he fancied he would like to possess an instrument with such a name. The instrument demanded the music that had been written for it. Byrd's beautiful vocal Mass had led him to Palestrina and Vittoria, and these wakened in him dreams of a sufficient choir at St. Joseph's for a revival of their works.

So when Evelyn clambered on her father's knee, it was to learn the chants that he hummed from old manuscripts and missals, and it was the contrapuntal fancies of the Elizabethan composers that he gave her to play on the virginal, or the preludes of Bach on the clavichord. Her infantile graces at these instruments were the delight and amazement of her parents. She warbled this old-time music as other children do the vulgar songs of the hour; she seemed less anxious to learn the operatic music which she heard in her mother's class-rooms, and there was a shade of uneasiness in Mrs. Innes's admiration of the beauty of Evelyn's taste; but Mr. Innes said that it was better that her first love should be for the best, and he could not help hoping that it would not be

with the airs of *Lucia* and *Traviata* that she would become famous. As if in answer, the child began to hum the celebrated waltz, a moment after a beautiful Ave Maria, composed by a Fleming at the end of the fifteenth century, a quick, sobbing rhythm, expressive of naïve petulance at delay in the Virgin's intercession. Mr. Innes called it natural music—music which the modern Church abhorred and shamefully ostracised; and the conversation turned on the incurably bad taste and the musical misdeeds of a certain priest, Father Gordon, whom Mr. Innes judged to be responsible for all the bad music to be heard at St. Joseph's.

For Mr. Innes's ambition was to restore the liturgical chants of the early centuries, from John Ockeghem, the Flemish silversmith of Louis XI., whose recreation it was to compose motets, to Thomas da Vittoria; and, after having made known the works of Palestrina and of those who gravitated around the great Roman composer, he hoped to disinter the masses of Orlando di Lasso, of Goudimel and Josquin des Près, the motets of Nannini, of Felice Anerio, of Clemens on Papa. . . . He would go still further back. For before this music was the plain chant or Gregorian, bequeathed to us by the early Church, coming down to her, perhaps, from Egyptian civilisation, the mother of all art and all religion, and incomparable treasure which unworthy inheritors have mutilated for centuries. It was Mr. Innes's belief that the supple, free melody of the Gregorian was lost in the shouting of operatic tenors and organ accompaniments. The tradition of its true interpretation had been lost, and the text itself, but by long study of ancient missals, Mr. Innes had penetrated the secret of the ancient notation,

vague as the eyeballs of the blind, and in the absence of a choir that could read this strange alphabet of sound, he cherished a plan for an edition of these old chants, re-written by him into the ordinary notation of our day. But impassable obstacles intervened: the apathy and indifference of the Jesuits, and their fear lest such radical innovations should prove unpopular and divert the congregation of St. Joseph's elsewhere. He had abandoned the hope of converting them from their error, but he was confident that reaction was preparing against the jovialities of Rossini, whose *Stabat Mater*, he said, still desecrated Good Friday, and against the erotics of M. Gounod and his suite. And this inevitable reaction Mr. Innes strove to advance by his pupils. Many became disciples and helped to preach the new musical gospel. He induced them to learn the old instruments, and among them found material for his concerts. Though a weak man in practical conduct, he was steadfast in his ideas. His concerts had begun to attract a little attention; he was receiving support from some rich amateurs, and was able to continue his propaganda under the noses of the worthy fathers in whose church he was now serving, but where he knew that one day he would be master.

But, unfortunately, Mr. Innes could only give a small part of his time to these concerts. Notwithstanding his persuasiveness, there remained on his hands some intractable pupils who would not hear of viol or harpsichord, who insisted upon being taught to play modern masses on the organ, and these he could not afford to refuse. For of late years his wife's failing health had forced her to relinquish teaching, and the burden of earning their living had fallen entirely upon him. She hoped that a

long rest might improve her in health, and that in some months—six, she imagined as a sufficient interval—she would be able to undertake in full earnestness her daughter's education. To do this had become her dearest wish; for there could now be little doubt that Evelyn had inherited her voice, the same beautiful quality and fluency in vocalisation; and thinking of it, Mrs. Innes held out her hands and looked at them, striving to read in them the progress of her illness. Evelyn wondered why, just at that moment, her father had turned from the bedside overcome by sudden tears. But whoever dies, life goes on the same, our interests and necessities brook little interference. Meal-times are always fixed times, and when father and daughter met in the parlour—it was just below the room in which Mrs. Innes was dying—Evelyn asked why her mother had looked at her hands so significantly.

He said that it was thus her mother foreshadowed Violetta's death, when Armand's visit is announced to her.

In the silence which followed this explanation their souls seemed to say what their lips could not. Sympathies and perceptions hitherto dormant were awakened; he recognised in her, and she, in herself, an unsuspected inheritance. Her voice she had received from her mother, but all else came from her father. She felt his life and character stirring in her, and moved as by a new instinct, she sat by his side, holding his hand. They sat waiting for the announcement of the death which could not be delayed much longer, and each thought of the difference the passing would make in their lives! It was her death that had brought them together, that had given them a



new and mutual life. And in those hours their eyes had seemed to seal a compact of love and fealty.

This was three years ago; but since Mrs. Innes's death very little had been done with Evelyn's voice. The Jesuits had spent money in increasing their choir and orchestra, and Mr. Innes was constantly rehearsing the latest novelties in religious music. All his spare time was occupied with private teaching; and discovering in his daughter a real aptitude for the lute, he had taught her that instrument, likewise the viola da gamba, for which she soon displayed even more original talent. She played both instruments at his concerts, and as several pupils offered themselves, he encouraged her to give lessons—he had made of her an excellent musician, able to write fugue and counterpoint; only the production of the voice he had neglected. Now and again, in a fit of repentance, he had insisted on her singing some scales, but his heart was not in the lesson, and it fell through.

He was suspicious that she knew she could not learn singing from him; but an avowal of his inability to teach her would necessitate some departure from his own ideas, and, like all men with a mission, Mr. Innes was deficient in moral courage, and in spite of himself he evaded all that did not coincide with the purpose of his life. He loved his daughter above everything, except his music, and the thought that he was sacrificing her to his ambition afflicted him with cruel assaults of conscience. Often he asked himself if he were capable of redeeming his promise to his dead wife, or if he shirked the uncongenial labour it entailed? And it was this torment-

ing question that had impelled him to light the candle, and raise it so that he could better see his wife's face.

Though an indifferent painting, the picture was elaborately like the sitter. The pointed oval of the face had been faithfully drawn, and its straight nose and small brown eyes were set characteristically in the head. Remembering a photograph of his daughter, Mr. Innes fetched it from the other end of the room, and stood with it under the portrait, so that he could compare both faces, feature by feature. Evelyn's face was rounder, her eyes were not deep-set like her mother's; they lay nearly on the surface, pools of light illuminating a very white and flower-like complexion. The nose was short and high; the line of the chin deflected, giving an expression of wistfulness to the face in certain aspects. Her father was still bent in examination of the photograph when she entered. It was very like her, and at first sight Nature revealed only two more significant facts: her height—she was a tall girl—and a beautiful undulation in her walk, occasioned by the slight droop in her shoulders. She was dressed in dark green woollen, with a large hat to match.

“Well, darling! and how have you been getting on?”

The vague pathos of his grey face was met by the bright effusion of hers, and throwing her arm about him, she kissed him on the cheek.

“Pretty well, dear; pretty well.”

“Only pretty well,” she answered reproachfully. “No one has been here to interrupt you; you have had all the afternoon for finishing that virginal, and you've only been getting on ‘pretty well.’ But I see your necktie has come undone.”

Then overlooking him from head to foot,—

“Well, you have been making a day of it.”

“Oh, these are my old clothes—that is glue; don’t look at me—I had an accident with the glue-pot; and that’s paint. Yes; I must get some new shirts, these won’t hold a button any longer.”

The conversation paused a few seconds, then running her finger down the keys, she said,—

“But it goes admirably.”

“Yes; I’ve finished it now; it is an exquisite instrument. I could not leave it till it was finished.”

“Then what are you complaining of, darling? Has Father Gordon been here? Has he discovered any new Belgian composer, and does he want all his music to be given at St. Joseph’s?”

“No; Father Gordon hasn’t been here, and as for the Belgian composers, there are none left; he has discovered them all.”

“Then you’ve been thinking about me, about my voice. That’s it,” she said, catching sight of her own photograph. “You’ve been frowning over that photograph, thinking”—her eyes went up to her mother’s portrait—“all sorts of nonsense, making yourself miserable, reproaching yourself that you do not teach me to vocalise, a thing which you know nothing about, or lamenting that you are not rich enough to send me abroad, where I could be taught it.” Then, with a pensive note in her voice which did not escape him, she said,—

“As if there was any need to worry. I’m not twenty yet.”

“No, you’re not twenty yet, but you will be very soon. Time is going by.

“Well, let time go by, I don’t care. I’m happy here with you, father. I wouldn’t go away, even if you had the money to send me. I intend to help you make the concerts a success. Then, perhaps, I shall go abroad.”

His heart went out to his daughter. He was proud of her, and her fine nature was a compensation for many disappointments. He took her in his arms and thankfully kissed her. She was touched by his emotion, and conscious that her eyes were threatening tears, she said,—

“I can’t stand this gloom. I must have some light. I’ll go and get a lamp. Besides, it must be getting late. I wonder what kind of a dinner Margaret has got for us. I left it to her. A good one, I hope. I’m ravenous.”

A few minutes after she appeared in the doorway, holding a lamp high, the light showing over her white skin and pale gold hair. “Margaret has excelled herself—boiled haddock, melted butter, a neck of mutton and a rice pudding. And I have brought back a bag of oranges. Now come, darling. You’ve done enough to that virginal. Run upstairs and wash your hands, and remember that the fish is getting cold.”

She was waiting for him in the little back room—the lamp was on the table—and when they sat down to dinner she began the tale of her day’s doings. But she hadn’t got farther than the fact that they had asked her to stay to tea at Queen’s Gate, when her tongue, which always went quite as fast as her thoughts, betrayed her, and before she was aware, she had said that her pupil’s sister was in delicate health and that the family was going abroad for the winter. This was equivalent to saying she had lost a pupil. So she rattled on, hoping that her father would not perceive the inference.

"There doesn't seem to be much luck about at present," he said. "That's the third pupil you've lost this month."

"It is unfortunate . . . and just as I was beginning to save a little money." A moment after her voice had recovered its habitual note of cheerfulness. "Then what do you think I did? An idea struck me; I took the omnibus and went straight to St. James's Hall."

"To St. James's Hall!"

"Yes, you old darling; don't you know that M. Desjardin, the French composer, has come over to give a series of concerts. I thought I should like him to try my voice."

"You didn't see him?"

"Yes I did. When I asked for him, the clerk said, pointing to a gentleman coming downstairs, that is Monsieur Desjardin. I went straight up to him, and told him who I was, and asked him if he had ever heard of mother. Just fancy, he never had; but he seemed interested when I told him that everyone said my voice was as good as mother's. We went into the hall, and I sang to him."

"What did you sing to him?"

"'Have you seen but a white lily grow?' and '*Que vous me coûte cher, mon cœur, pour vos plaisirs.*'"

"Ah! that music must have surprised him. What did he say?"

"I don't think I sang very well, but he seemed pleased, and asked me if I knew any modern music. I said 'Very little.' He was surprised at that. But he said I had a very fine voice, and sang the old music beautifully, but that it would be impossible for me to

sing modern music without ruining my voice, until I had been taught. I asked him if it would not be well to try to earn a little money by concert singing, so that I might go abroad later on. He said, 'I am glad that all my arrangements are made, otherwise I might be tempted to offer you an engagement. One engagement leads to another, and if you sing before your voice is properly placed'—'*posée*' was the word he used—'you will ruin it.'"

"Is that all?"

"Yes, that's all." Then, noticing the pained look that had come into her father's face, she added, "It was nice to hear that he thought well of my voice."

But she could tell what he was thinking of, and regretting her tongue's indiscretion, she tried to divert his thoughts from herself. His brooding look continued, and to remove it she had to fetch his pipe and tobacco. When he had filled it for the third time he said,—

"There is the Bach and the Handel sonata waiting for us; we ought to be getting to work."

"I'm quite ready, father. I suppose I must not eat any more oranges," and she surveyed her plate full of skins.

Mr. Innes took up the lamp, Evelyn called to the servant to get another, and followed him into the music-room. The lamps were placed on the harpsichord. She lighted some candles, and in the moods and aspirations of great men they found a fairyland, and the lights disappeared from the windows opposite, leaving them still there.

The wings of the hours were light—weariness could not reach them—and at half-past eleven Mr. Innes was

speaking of a beautiful motet, "O Magnum Mysterium," by Vittoria. His fingers lingered in the wailing chords, and he said,—

"That is where Wagner went for his chorus of youths in the cupola. The critics haven't discovered it yet; they are still talking of Palestrina."

## II.

JESUITS from St. Joseph's were not infrequently seen at Mr. Innes's concerts. The worthy fathers, although they did not see their way to guaranteeing a yearly grant of money sufficient to ensure adequate performances of Palestrina's finest works, were glad to support, with occasional guineas, their organist's concerts. Painters and men of letters were attracted by them; musicians seldom. Nor did Mr. Innes encourage their presence. Musicians were of no use to him. They were, he said, divided into two classes—those who came to scoff, and those who came to steal. He did not want either sort.

The rare music interested but a handful, and the audience that had come from London shivered in remembrance of the east wind which had accompanied their journey. But this little martyrdom did not seem to be entirely without its satisfactions, and conscious of superiority, they settled themselves to listen to the few words of explanation with which Mr. Innes was accustomed to introduce the music that was going to be played. He was speaking, when he was interrupted by the servant-maid, who whispered and gave him a card: "Sir Owen Asher, Bart., 27 Berkeley Square." He left the room

hurriedly, and his audience surmised from his manner that something important had happened.

Sir Owen, seemingly a tall man, certainly above the medium height, was waiting for him in the passage. His thin figure was wrapped tightly in an overcoat, most of his face was concealed in the collar, and the pale gold-coloured moustache showed in contrast to the dark brown fur. The face, wide across the forehead, acquired an accent in the pointed chin and strongly marked jaw. The straight nose was thin and well shaped in the nostrils. "An attractive man of forty" would be the criticism of a woman. Sir Owen's attractiveness concentrated in his sparkling eyes and his manner, which was at once courteous and manly. He told Mr. Innes that he had heard of his concerts that morning at the office of the *Wagnerian Review*, and Mr. Innes indulged in his habitual dream of a wealthy patron who would help him to realise his musical ambitions. Sir Owen had just bought the periodical, he intended to make it an organ of advanced musical culture, and would like to include a criticism of these concerts. Mr. Innes begged Sir Owen to come into the concert-room. But while taking off his coat, Sir Owen mentioned what he had heard regarding Mr. Innes's desire to revive the vocal masses of the sixteenth century at St. Joseph's, and the interest of this conversation delayed them a little in the passage.

The baronet's evening clothes were too well cut for those of a poet, a designer of wall paper, or a journalist, and his hands were too white and well cared for at the nails. His hair was pale brown, curling a little at the ends, and carefully brushed and looking as if it had



been freshened by some faintest application of perfumed essence. Three pearl studs fastened his shirt front, and his necktie was tied in a butterfly bow. He displayed some of the nonchalant ease which wealth and position create, smiled a little on catching sight of the jersey worn by a lady who had neglected to fasten the back of her bodice, and strove to decipher the impression the faces conveyed to him. He grew aware of that flitting anxiety which is inseparable from the task of finding a daily living, and that pathos which tells of fidelity to idea and abstinence from gross pleasure. A young man, who stood apart, in a carefully studied attitude, a dark lock of hair falling over his forehead, amused him, and the young man in the chair next Sir Owen wore a threadbare coat and clumsy boots, and sat bolt upright. Sir Owen pitied him and imagined him working all day in some obscure employment, finding his life's pleasure once a week in a score by Bach. Catching sight of a priest's profile, a look of contempt appeared on his face.

He was of his class, he had lived its life and lived it still, in a measure, but from the beginning his ideas and tastes had been superior to those of a merely fashionable man. At five-and-twenty he had purchased a Gainsborough, and at thirty he had spent a large sum of money in exhuming some sonatas of Bach from the dust in which they were lying. At three-and-thirty he had wrecked the career of a fashionable soprano by inspiring her with the belief that she might become a great singer, a great artist; at five-and-thirty Bayreuth and its world of musical culture and ideas had interested him in spite of his unconquerable aversion to long hair and dirty hands. After some association with geniuses he

withdrew from the art-world, confessing himself unable to bear the society of those who did not dress for dinner; but while repudiating, he continued to spy the art-world from a distance. An audience is, however, necessary to a 'cello player, and the Turf Club and the Royal Yacht Club contained not a dozen members, he said, who would recognise the Heroica Symphony if they happened to hear it, which was not likely. Lately he had declared openly that he was afraid of entering any of his clubs, lest he should be asked once more what he thought of the Spring Handicaps, and if he intended sailing the *Medusa* in the Solent this season. Nevertheless, his journey to Bayreuth could not but produce an effect. He had purchased the *Wagnerian Review*; it had led him to Mr. Innes's concerts, and he was already interested in the prospect of reviving the early music and its instruments. That this new movement should be begun in Dulwich, a suburb he would never have heard of if it had not been for its picture gallery, stimulated his curiosity.

It is the variation, not the ordinary specimen, that is most typical, for the variation contains the rule in essence, and the deviation elucidates the rule. So in his revolt against the habitual pleasures and ideas of his class, Sir Owen became more explanatory of that class than if he had acquiesced in the usual ignorance of £20,000 a year. To the ordinary eye he was merely the conventional standard of the English upper classes, but more intimate observation revealed the slight glaze of Bohemianism which natural inclination and many adventures in that land had left upon him. He listened without parade, his grey eyes following the music—they,

not the head, seeming to nod to it; and when Mr. Innes approached to ask him his opinion, he sprang to his feet to tell him.

One of the pieces they had heard was a pavane for five viols and a harpsichord, composed by Ferrabosco, son of the Italian musician who had settled in Greenwich at the end of the sixteenth century. Sir Owen was extraordinarily pleased and interested, and declared the pavane to be as complete as a sonata by Bach or Beethoven; but his appreciation was suddenly interrupted by someone looking at him.

At a little distance, Evelyn stood looking at him. The moment she had seen him she had stopped, and her eyes were delighted as by a vision. Though he represented to her the completely unknown, she seemed to have known him always in her heart; she seemed to have been waiting for knowledge of this unknown, and the rumour of the future grew loud in her ears.

He raised his eyes and saw a tall, fair girl dressed in pale green. Mr. Innes introduced them.

“My daughter—Sir Owen Asher.”

In the little while which he took to decide whether he would take tea or coffee, he thought that something could be said for her figure, and he liked her hair, but, on the whole, he did not think he cared for her. She seemed to him an unimportant variety of what he had met before. He said he would take tea, and then he changed his mind and said he would have coffee, but Evelyn came back with a cup of tea, and, perceiving her mistake, she laughed abstractedly.

“You are going to sing two songs, Miss Innes. I’m glad; I hear your voice is wonderful.”

The sound of his voice conveyed a penetrating sense of his presence. It was the same happiness which the very sight of him had awakened in her, and she felt herself yielding to it as to a current. She was borne far away into mists of dream, where she seemed to live a long while. Time seemed to have ceased and the outside world to have fallen behind her. The sensation was the most delicious she had ever experienced. She hardly heard the answers that she made to his questions, and when her father called her, it was like returning after a long absence.

She sang much more beautifully than he had expected, and during the preludes and fugues and the sonatas by Bach, which finished the programme, he thought of her voice, occasionally questioning himself regarding his taste for her. Even in this short while he had come to like her better. She had beautiful teeth and hair, and he liked her figure, notwithstanding the fact that her shoulders sloped a little—perhaps because they did slope a little. He noticed, whether her eyes wandered or remained fixed, that they returned to him, and that their glance was one of interrogation, as if all depended upon him. When the concert was over he was anxious to speak to her, so that he grew impatient with the people who stopped his way. The back room was filled with musical instruments—there were two harpsichords, a clavichord and an organ, and Mr. Innes insisted on explaining these instruments to him. He seemed to Owen to pay too slight a heed to his daughter's voice. That she played the viola da gamba very well was true enough, but what sense was there in a girl like that playing an instrument? Her voice was her instrument.

When he was able to get a few words with her, he told her about Madame Savelli. There was no one else, he said, who could teach singing. She must go to France at once, and he seemed to take it for granted that she might start at the end of the week, if she only made up her mind. She did not know what answer to make, and was painfully conscious how silly she must look standing before him unable to say a word. It was no longer the same; some of the dream had been swept aside, and reality had begun to look through it. Her intense consciousness of this tall, aristocratic man frightened her. She saw the embroidered waistcoat, the slight hips, the gold moustache, and the sparkling grey eyes asked her questions to which her whole nature violently responded, and, though her feelings were inexplicable to herself, she was overcome with physical shame. Father Railston was looking at her, and the thought crossed her mind that he would not approve of Sir Owen Asher. Feeling very uncomfortable, she seized an opportunity of saying good-bye to a friend, and escaped from Sir Owen, leaving him, as she knew, under the impression that she was a little fool not worth taking further trouble about. But his ideas were different from all she had been taught, and it would be better if she never saw him again. She did not doubt, however, that she would see him again, and when, two days after, the servant announced him and he walked into the music-room, she was less surprised than her father.

The review, he said, could not go to press without an article on the concert, but to do this article he must consult Mr. Innes, for in the first piece, "La my," the viols had seemed to him out of tune. Of course this

was not so—perhaps one of the players had played a wrong note; that might be the explanation. But on referring to the music, Mr. Innes discovered a better one. “From the twelfth to the fifteenth century, writers,” he said, “did not consider their music as moderns do. Now we watch the effect of a chord, a combination of notes heard at the same moment, the top note of which is the tune, but the older writers used their skill in divining musical phrases which could be followed simultaneously, each one going logically its own way, irrespective of some temporary clashing. They considered their music horizontally, as the parts went on; we consider it vertically, each chord producing its impression in turn. To them all the parts were of equal importance. Their music was a purely decorative interweaving of melodies. Now we have a tune with accompanying parts.”

“What a wonderful knowledge of music your father has, Miss Innes!”

“Yes, father reads old MSS. that no one else can decipher.”

“These discords happened,” Mr. Innes said, as he went to the harpsichord, “when a composition was based upon some old plain song melody, the notes of which could not be altered. Then the musician did not scruple to write in one of the other parts the same note altered by a sharp or a flat to suit the passing requirement of the musical phrase allotted to that part. You could thus have together, say an F natural in one part and an F sharp in another. This to modern ears, not trained to understand the meaning of the two parts, is intolerable.

While he spoke of the relative fineness of the ancient

and modern ear, maintaining that the reason ancient singers could sing without an accompaniment was that they were trained to sing from the monochord, Owen considered the figure of this tall, fair girl, and wondered if she would elect to remain with her father, playing the viola da gamba in Dulwich, or bolt with a manager—that was what generally happened. Her father was a most interesting old man, a genius in his way, but just such an one as might prove his daughter's ruin. He would keep her singing the old music, perhaps marry her to a clerk, and she would be a fat, prosaic mother of three in five years.

However this might be, he, Owen, was interested in her voice, and, if he had never met Georgina, he might have liked this girl. It would be better that he should take her away than that she should go away with a manager who would rob and beat her. But, if he were to take her away, he would be tied to her; it would be like marrying her. Far better stick to married women, and he remembered his epigram of last night. It was at Lady Ascott's dinner-party, the conversation had turned on marriage, and its necessity had been questioned. "But, of course, marriage is necessary," he had answered. "You can't have husbands without marriage, and if there were no husbands, who would look after our mistresses?" A lot of hypocrites had chosen to look shocked; Georgina had said it was a horrid remark and had hardly spoken to him all the evening; and this afternoon she had said she should not come and see him any more—she was afraid her husband suspected, her children were growing up, etc. When women cease to care for one, how importunate their consciences are! A little terror took him,

and he wondered if he were about to lose Georgina, or if she were only trying to make him jealous. Perhaps he could not do better than make her jealous. For that purpose this young girl was just the thing.

Moreover, he was interested in the revival of Palestrina at St. Joseph's, and he liked Ferrabosco's pavane. He would like to have a harpsichord; even if he did not play on it much, it would be a beautiful, characteristic piece of furniture. . . . And it would be a good idea to ask Mr. Innes to bring all his queer instruments to Berkeley Square, and give a concert to-morrow night after his dinner-party. His friends had bored him with Hungarian bands, and the improvisations the bands had been improvising for the last ten years, and he saw no reason why he should not bore them, just for a change, with Mr. Innes.

At this moment his reflections were interrupted by Mr. Innes, who wanted to know if he did not agree with him regarding the necessity for the re-introduction of the monochord, if the sixteenth century masses were ever to be sung again properly. All this was old story to Evelyn. In a sort of dream, through a sort of mist, she saw the embroidered waistcoat and the gold moustache, and when the small, grey, smiling eyes were raised from her father's face and looked at her, a delicious sensation penetrated through the very tissues of her flesh, and she experienced the tremor of a decisive moment; and then there came again a gentle sense of delicious bewilderment and illusion.

She did not know how it would all happen, but her life seemed for the first time to have come to a definite issue. The very moment he had spoken of Madame



Savelli, the great singing-mistress, it was as if a light had begun in her brain, and she saw a faint horizon line; she seemed to see Paris from afar; she knew she would go there to study, and that night she had fallen asleep listening to the applause of three thousand hands.

But she did not like to stand before him, offering him first the cup of tea, then the milk and sugar, then the cake, and bread and butter. Her repugnance had nothing to do with him; it was an obscure feeling, quite incomprehensible to herself. When he looked up she answered him with a smile which she felt to be mysterious, and he perceived its mystery, for he compared it to the hesitating smile of the Monna Lisa, a print of which hung on the wall. But the remark increased her foreboding and premonition. And she was sorry for her father, who was saying that he hoped to send her abroad in the spring; that he would have done so before, but she was studying harmony with him. And she could see that Owen was bored. He was only staying on in the hope of speaking to her, but she knew that her father was not going out, so there was no chance of their having a few words together. His invitation to Mr. Innes to bring the instruments to London, and give a concert to-morrow night at Berkeley Square, he had reserved till the moment he had got up to go. Mr. Innes was taken aback. He doubted if there would be time to get the instruments to London. But Owen said that all that was necessary was a Pickford van, and that if he would say "Yes," the van and a competent staff of packers would be at Dulwich in the morning, and would take all further trouble off his hands. The question was debated. Mr. Innes thought the instruments had better go by train,

and Owen could not help smiling when he said that he would arrive with the big harpsichord and Evelyn about nine or half-past.

She had two evening gowns—a pale green silk and a white. The pale green looked very nice; it had cost her three pounds. The white had nearly ruined her, but it had seemed to suit her so well that she had not been able to resist, and had paid five pounds ten, a great deal for her to spend on a dress. Its great fault was that it soiled at the least touch. She had worn it three times, and could not wear it again till it had been cleaned. It was a pity, but there was no help for it. She would have to wear the green, and to console herself she thought of the compliments she had had for it at different parties. But these seemed insignificant when she thought of the party she was going to to-night.

She had never been to Berkeley Square, and expected to be surprised. But it lay in a hollow, a dignified, secluded square, exactly as she had imagined it. Nor did the great doorway, and the carpet that stretched across the pavement for her to walk upon, surprise her, nor the lines of footmen, nor the natural grace of the wide staircase. She seemed to have seen it all before, only she could not remember where. It came back to her like a dream. She seemed to recognise the pictures of the goddesses, the Holy Families and the gold mirrors; and lifting her eyes, she saw Owen at the head of the stairs, and he smiled so familiarly, that it seemed strange to think that this was only the third time she had seen him.

He introduced her father to a fashionable musician, whose pavanés and sonatas were composed with that lack

of matter and excess of erudition which delight the amateur and irritate the artist, and he walked down the rooms looking for seats where they could talk undisturbed for a few minutes. He was nervous lest Georgina should find him sitting with this girl in an intimate corner, but he did not expect her for another half-hour, and could not resist the temptation. He was curious to know how far Evelyn acquiesced in the obscure lot which her father imposed upon her, to play the viola da gamba, and sing old music, instead of singing for her own fame upon the stage. But had she a great voice? If she had, he would like to help her. The discovery of a new prima donna would be a fine feather in his cap. Above all, he was also curious to find out if she were the innocent maiden she appeared to be, or if she had had flirtations with the clerks in the neighbourhood, and he found his opportunity to speak to her on this subject in the first line of a French song she was going to sing:—

“*Que vous me coûte cher, mon cœur, pour vos plaisirs.*”

His appreciation of her changed every moment. Truly her eyes lit up with a beautiful light, and her remarks about the length of our payment for our pleasures revealed an apprehension which he had not credited her with. But he was alarmed at the quickness with which they had strayed to the very verge of things. From the other room they would seem very intimate, sitting on a sofa together, and he was expecting Georgina every minute. If she were to see them, it would lead to further discussion, and supply her with an excuse. But his curiosity was kindled, and while he considered how he could lead Evelyn into confidences, he saw her arm trembling through the gauze sleeve, for it seemed to her

that all that was happening now had happened before. The walls covered with red pleated silk, the bracket-clocks, the brocade-covered chairs: where had she seen them? And Owen's grey eyes fixed upon her: where had she seen them? In a dream perhaps. She asked him if he had ever experienced the sensation of having already lived through a scene that was happening at the very moment. He did not seem to hear; he seemed expecting someone; and then the vision returned to her again, and she could not but think that she had known Sir Owen long ago, but how and where she could not tell. At that moment she noticed his absent-mindedness, and it was suddenly flashed upon her that he was in love with some woman and was waiting for her, and almost at the same moment she saw a tall, red-haired woman cross the further room. The woman paused in the doorway, as if looking for someone. She nodded to Owen and engaged in conversation with a group of men standing by the fireplace. Something told Evelyn that that smooth, cream-coloured neck was the woman Owen was in love with, and the sudden formality of his manner convinced her that she was right, that that was the woman he was in love with. He said that he must go and see after his other guests, and as she expected, he went straight to the woman with the red hair. But she did not leave her friends. After shaking hands with Owen, she continued talking to them, and he was left out of the conversation.

The concert began with a sonata for the harpsichord and the viola da gamba, and then Evelyn sang her two songs. She sang for Owen, and it seemed to her that she was telling him that she was sorry that it had all

happened as it had happened, and that he must go away and be happy with the woman he loved. She did not think that she sang particularly well, but Owen came and told her that she had sung charmingly, and in their eyes were strange questions and excuses, and an avowal of regret that things were not different. Slim women in delicious gowns glided up and praised her, but she did not think that they had been as much impressed by her singing as they said; distinguished men were introduced to her, and she felt she had nothing to say to them; and looking round the circle of men and women she saw Owen in the doorway, and noticed that his eyes were restless and constantly wandered in the direction of the tall woman with the red hair, who sat calmly talking to her friends, never noticing him. He seemed waiting for a look that never came; his glances were furtive and quickly withdrawn, as if he feared he was being watched. When she got up to leave, Owen came forward and spoke to her, but she barely replied, and left the room alone. Evelyn saw all this, and she was surprised when Owen came rapidly through the room and sat down by her. He was painfully absent-minded, and so nervous that he did not seem to know what he was saying; indeed, that was the only excuse she could make for his remarks. She hardly recognised this man as the man she had hitherto known. She hated all his sentiments and his ideas; she thought them horrid, and was glad when her father came to tell her it was time for her to go.

“You didn’t sing well,” he said, as they went home. “What was the matter with you?”

Owen and the red-haired lady seemed to fall behind

this last misfortune. If she had lost her voice she was no longer herself, and as she went to her teaching she saw herself a music-mistress to the end of her days.

But on Sunday morning she came downstairs singing, and Mr. Innes heard a future prima donna in her voice. Her face lit up, and she said, "Do you think so, dear. It was unlucky I sang so badly the other night. I seemed to have no voice at all."

He told her that there were times when her mother suddenly lost her voice.

"But, father, you are not fit to go out, and can't go out in that state."

"What is the matter?" and his hand went to his shirt-collar.

"No, your necktie is all right. Ah! there you've untied it; I'll tie it for you. It's your coat that wants brushing."

The black frock-coat which he wore on Sundays was too small for him. If he buttoned it, it wrinkled round the waist and across the chest; if he left it open, its meagre width and the shortness of the skirts (they were the fashion of more than ten years ago) made it seem ridiculous. At the elbows the cloth was shiny with long wear, and the cuffs were frayed. His hat was as antiquated as his coat. It was a mere pulp, greasy inside and brown outside; the brim was too small, it was too low in the crown, and after the severest brushing it remained rough like a blanket. Evelyn handed it back to him in despair. He thanked his daughter, put it on his head, and forgot its appearance. But in spite of shabby coat and shabbier hat, Mr. Innes remained free from suspicion of vulgarity—the sad dignity of his grey

face and the dreams that haunted his eyes saved him from that.

"And whose mass are you going to play to-day?" she asked him.

"A mass by Hummel, in B; on Thursday, a mass by Dr. Gladstone; and next Sunday, Mozart's Twelfth, beloved of Father Gordon and village choirs. I wonder if he will allow the Reproaches to be sung in Holy Week? He will insist on the expense of the double choir."

"But, father, do you think that the congregation of St. Joseph's is one that would care for the refinement of Palestrina? Would you not require a cultivated West-end audience—the Oratory or Farm Street?"

"That is Sir Owen's opinion."

"I never heard him say so."

How had she come to repeat anything she had heard him say? Moreover, why had she said that she had not heard him say so? And Evelyn argued with herself until the train reached their station—it was one of those absurd little mental complications, the infinitesimal life that flourishes deep in the soul.

A little way down a side street, a few yards from the main thoroughfare, where the roads branched, the great gaunt façade of St. Joseph's pointed against a yellow sky. Its foundations had been laid and its walls built by a priest, who had collected large sums of money in America, and whose desire had been to have the largest church that could be built for the least money, in the shortest possible time. The result was the great, sprawling, grey stone building with a desolate spire, now fading into the darkness of the snow-storm. Money had run short. The church had not been completed when its

founder died; then another energetic priest had raised another subscription. Doors and stained glass had been added, and, for awhile, St. Joseph's had become a flourishing parish church, supported by various suburbs, and projects for the completion of its interior decoration had begun to be entertained; but while these projects were under consideration, the suburbs had acquired churches of their own, and the congregation of St. Joseph's had dwindled until it had lost all means of support, except the meagre assistance it received from the poor Irish and Italians of the neighbourhood. There had been talk of closing the church, and it would have had to be closed if the Jesuits had not accepted the mission. Another subscription had been started, but the greater part of this third subscription the Jesuits had spent upon their schools, so the fate of St. Joseph's seemed to be to remain, as someone had said, an unfinished ruin. Their resources were exhausted, and they surveyed the barren aisles, dreaming of the painting and mosaics they would put up when the promises of Father Gordon were realised. For it was understood that their fortunes should be retrieved by his musical abilities, and his competence to select the most attractive masses. Father Gordon was a type often found among amateur musicians—a man with a slight technical knowledge, a good ear, and nice voice, and absolutely no taste whatever. His natural ear was for obvious rhythm, his taste coincided with the popular taste, and as the necessity of attracting a congregation was paramount, it is easy to imagine how easily he conceded to his natural inclinations. And the arguments with which he rebutted those of his opponents were unanswerable, that what-



ever moved the heart to the love of God was right that if the plain chant failed to help the soul to aspiration, we were justified in substituting Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, or whatever other musical idiom the neighbourhood craved for.

Religious rite, according to Father Gordon should conform to the artistic taste of the congregation, and he urged, with some force, that the artistic taste of Southwark stood on quite as high a level as that of Mayfair. To get a Mayfair audience they had only to follow the taste of Southwark. And so, under his guidance, the Jesuits had increased their orchestra and employed the best tenors that could be hired. Nevertheless, their progress was slow. Father Gordon pleaded patience. The neighbourhood was unfashionable; it was difficult to persuade their friends to come so far. Mr. Innes answered that if they gave him a choir of forty-five voices—he could do nothing with less—the West-end would come at once to hear Palestrina. The distance, and the fact of the church being in a slum, he maintained, would not be in itself a drawback. Half the success of Bayreuth, he urged, is owing to its being so far off. And this plan, too, seemed to possess some elements of success, and so the Jesuits hesitated between very divergent methods by which the same result might be attained.

A few flakes of snow were falling, and Evelyn and her father put up their umbrellas as they crossed the road to the church. Three steps led to the pointed door above which was the figure of the patron saint.

The nakedness of the unfinished and undecorated church was hidden in the twilight of the approaching

storm, and Evelyn trembled as she walked up the aisle, so menacing seemed the darkness that descended from the sky. The stained glass, blackened by the smoke of the factory chimneys, let in but little light, the aisles were plunged in darkness, and kneeling in her favourite place the ineffectual gaslight seemed to her like painted flames on a dark background. The side chapels which opened on to the aisles were shut off by no ornamental screens, indeed, the only piece of decoration seemed to be the fine modern ironwork which veiled the sanctuary.

She opened her prayer book, but in the shadow of the pillar where she was kneeling there was not sufficient light for her to read, so she bent her face upon her hands, intent upon losing herself in prayer. She abased herself before her Father in Heaven; attaining once more the wonderful human moment when the creature who crouches on this rim of earth implores pardon for her trespass from the beneficent Creator of things. But to-day her devotional mood was interrupted by sudden thought and sensation of Owen's presence; she was forced to look up, and convinced that he was very near her, she sought him amid the crowd of people who sat and knelt in front of her, blackening the dusk, a vague darkness in which she could at first distinguish nothing but an occasional white plume and a bald head. But her eyes grew accustomed to the darkness, and above the uninteresting backs of middle-aged men she recognised his thin sharp shoulders. She had been compelled to look up from her prayers, and she wondered if he had been thinking of her. If so, it was very wrong of him to interrupt her at her prayers. But a sensation of pleasure arose spontaneously in her. At that moment

he had to remove his hat from the chair on which he had placed it, and she noticed the gold stud links in his large shirt cuffs, the rough material of which the coat was made, and how well it lay along the thin arm. She imagined the look of vexation on the grave interesting face, and laughed a little to herself. What was the poor woman to do? She had a right to her chair. But she did look so frightened, and was visibly perturbed by the presence of so fine a gentleman. Evelyn knew the woman by sight—a curious thin and crooked creature, who wore a strange bonnet and a little black mantle, and walked up the church, her hands crossed like a doll. . . .

No doubt he had driven all the way from Berkeley Square. She could see him leaning back in his brougham, humming various music, or plaintively thinking about the lady with the red hair, who did not care for him. Her breath caught her in the throat. That was the reason why he had come to St. Joseph's. It was all over with the red-haired lady, and it was for her that he had come to St. Joseph's! But that could not be. . . . She saw him moving in rich and elegant society, where everyone had a title, and the narrowness of her life compared with his dismayed her. It was impossible that he could care for her. She was remaining in Dulwich, with nothing but a few music lessons to look forward to. . . . But when she reached the operatic stage her life would be like his, and the vision of her future passed before her eyes—diamonds in stars, baskets of wonderful flowers, applause, and the perfume of a love-story, swinging like a censer over it all.

At that moment the priests entered; mass began. She opened her prayer book, but, however firmly she fixed

her thoughts in prayer, they sprang back, without her knowing it, to Owen and the red-haired woman, with the smooth, cream-coloured shoulders. Without being aware of it, she was looking at him, and it was such a delight to think of him that she could not refrain. His chair was the last on the third line from the altar rail, and she noticed that he wore patent-leather shoes; the hitching of the dark grey trousers displayed a silk sock; but he suddenly uncrossed his legs, and assumed a less negligent attitude. In a sudden little melancholy she remembered how he had watched the woman with the red hair, and the determined indifference of this woman's face as she left the room. Immediately after she was amused at the way in which his face expressed his opinion of the music, and she had to admit to herself that he listened as if he understood it.

It was not until her father began to play the offertory, one of Schubert's beautiful inspirations, that she noticed the look of real delight that held the florid profile till the last note, and for some seconds after. "He certainly does love music," she thought; and when the bell rang for the Elevation, she bowed her head and became aware of the Real Presence. When it rang a second time, she felt life stifle in her. When it rang a third time, she again became conscious of time and place. But the sensation of awe which the accomplishment of the mystery had inspired was dissipated in the tumult of a very hideous *Agnus Dei*, in the voice of a certain concert singer, who seemed determined to shout down the organ. Evelyn had some difficulty in keeping her countenance, so plain was the expression of amazement upon the profile in front of her.

Then the book was carried from the right to the left side of the altar, and when the priest had read the Gospel, she began once more to ask herself the reason that had brought Sir Owen to St. Joseph's. The manner in which he genuflected before the altar told her that he was a Catholic; perhaps he had come to St. Joseph's merely to hear mass.

"I have come to see your father."

"You will find him in the organ loft. . . . But he'll be down presently."

And at the end of the church, in a corner out of the way of the crowd, they waited for Mr. Innes, and she learnt almost at once, from his face and the remarks that he addressed to her, that it was not for her that he had come to St. Joseph's. His carriage was waiting, he told the coachman to follow; all three tramped through the snow together to the station. In the miserable walk she learnt that he had decided to go for a trip round the world in his yacht, and expected to be away for nearly a year. As he bade them good-bye he looked at her, and his eyes seemed to say he was sorry that it was so, that he wished it were otherwise. She felt that if she had been able to ask him to stay he would have stayed; but, of course, that was impossible, and the last she saw of him was as he turned, just before getting into his brougham, to tell her father that the best critic of the *Review* should attend the concerts, and that he hoped that what he would write would bring some people of taste to hear them.

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## III.

THE name was no indication. None remembered that Dowlands was the name of Henry the Eighth's favourite lute player, and there was nothing in the snug masonry to suggest an æstheticism of any kind. The dulcimers, lutes and virginals surprised the visitor coming in from the street, and he stayed his steps as he might on the threshold of a fairy land.

The villas, of which Dowlands was one, were a builder's experiment. They had been built in the hopes of attracting wealthy business West-end shopkeepers; but Dulwich had failed to become a fashionable suburb. Mary had remained empty, and when Mr. Innes had entered into negotiations with the house agents, they declared themselves willing to entertain all his proposals, and finally he had acquired a lease at a greatly reduced rental.

In accordance with his and Mrs. Innes's wishes, the house had been considerably altered. Partition walls had been taken away, and practically the whole ground floor converted into class-rooms, leaving free only one little room at the back where they had their meals. During his wife's lifetime the house suited their requirements. The train service from Victoria was frequent, and on the back of their notepaper was printed a little map, whereby pupils coming and going from the station could find their way. On the second floor was Mr. Innes's workshop, where he restored the old instruments or made new ones after the old models. There was Evelyn's bedroom—her mother had re-furnished it before she died—

and she often sat there; it was, in truth, the most habitable room in the house. There was Evelyn's old nursery, now an unoccupied room; and there were two other empty rooms. She had tried to convert one into a little oratory. She had placed there a statue of the Virgin, and hung a crucifix on the wall, and bought a *prie-Dieu* and put it there. But the room was too lonely, and she found she could say her prayers more fervently by her bedside. Their one servant slept downstairs in a room behind the kitchen. So the house often had the appearance of a deserted house; and Evelyn, when she returned from London, where she went almost daily to give music lessons, often paused on the threshold, afraid to enter till her ear detected some slight sound of her servant at work. Then she cried, "Is that you, Margaret?" and she advanced cautiously, till Margaret answered, "Yes, miss."

The last summer and autumn had been the pleasantest in her life since her mother's death. Her pupils interested her—she had some six or seven. Her flow of bright talk, her eager manner, her beautiful playing of the viola da gamba, her singing of certain old songs, her mother's fame, and the hopes she entertained of one day achieving success on the stage made her a heroine among her little circle of friends. Her father was a remarkable man, but he seemed to her the most wonderful of men. It was exciting to go to London with him, to bid him good-bye at Victoria—she to her lessons, he to his—to meet him in the evenings, and in conjunction to arrange the programme of their next concert. These interests and ambitions had sufficed to fill her life, and to keep the greater ambition out of sight; and since her mother's death she had lived happily with her father, helping

him in his work. But lately things had changed. Some of her pupils had gone abroad, others had married, and interest in the concerts declined. For a little while the old music had seemed as if it were going to attract sufficient attention, but already their friends had heard enough, and Mr. Innes had been compelled to postpone the next, which had been announced for the beginning of February. There would be no concert now till March, perhaps not even then; so there was nothing for her to look forward to, and the wet windy weather which swept the suburb contributed to her disheartenment. The only event of the day seemed to be her father's departure in the morning. Immediately after breakfast he tied up his music in a brown paper parcel and put his violin into its case; he spoke of missing his train, and, from the windows of the music-room, she saw him hastening down the road. She had asked him if there were any MSS. he wished copied in the British Museum; absent-mindedly he had answered "No;" and, drumming on the glass with her fingers, she wondered how the day would pass. There was nothing to do; there was nothing even to think about. She was tired of thinking that a pupil might come back—that a new pupil might at any moment knock at the door. She was tired of wondering if her father's concerts would ever pay—if the firm of music publishers with whom he was now in treaty would come to terms and enable him to give a concert in their hall, or if they would break off negotiations, as many had done before. And, more than of everything else, she was tired of thinking if her father would ever have money to send her abroad, or if she would remain in Dulwich always.



One morning, as she was returning from Dulwich, where she had gone to pay the weekly bills, she discovered that she was no longer happy. She stopped, and, with an empty heart, saw the low-lying fields with poultry pens, and the hobbled horse grazing by the broken hedge. The old village was her prison, and she longed as a bird longs. She had trundled her hoop there; she ought to love it, but she didn't, and, looking on its too familiar aspect, her aching heart asked if it would never pass from her. It seemed to her that she had not strength nor will to return home. A little further on she met the vicar. He bowed, and she wondered how he could have thought that she could care for him. Oh, to live in that Rectory with him! She pitied the young man who wore brown clothes, and whose employment in a bank prevented him from going abroad for his health. These people were well enough, but they were not for her. She seemed to see beyond London, beyond the seas, whither she could not say, and she could not quell the yearning which rose to her lips like a wave, and over them.

Formerly, when there was choir practice at St. Joseph's, she used to go there and meet her father, but lately, for some reason which she could not explain to herself, she had refrained. The thought of this church had become distasteful to her, and she returned home indifferent to everything, to music and religion alike. Her eyes turned from the pile of volumes—part of Bach's interminable works—and all the old furniture, and she stood at the window and watched the rain dripping into the patch of black garden in front of the house, surrounded by a low stone wall. The villas opposite sug-

gested a desolation which found a parallel in her heart; the sloppy road and the pale brown sky frightened her, so menacing seemed their monotony. She knew all this suburb; it was all graven on her mind, and all that ornamental park where she must go, if it cleared a little, for her afternoon walk. She must tramp round that park once more. She strove to keep out of her mind its symmetrical walls, its stone basins, where the swans floated like white china ornaments, almost as lifeless. But worse even than these afternoons were the hours between six and eight. For very often her father was detained, and if he missed the half-past six train he had to come by the half-past seven, and in those hours of waiting the dusk grew oppressive and fearful in the music-room. Startled by a strange shadow, she crouched in her armchair, and when the feeling of dread passed she was weak from want of food. Why did her father keep her waiting? Hungry, faint and weary of life, she opened a volume of Bach; but there was no pleasure for her in the music, and if she opened a volume of songs she had neither strength nor will to persevere even through the first, and, rising from the instrument, she walked across the room, stretching her arms in a feverish despair. She had not eaten for many hours, and out of the vacuity of the stomach a dimness rose into her eyes. Pressing her eyes with her hand, she leaned against the door.

One evening she walked into the garden. The silence and damp of the earth revived her, and the sensation of the cold stone, against which she was leaning, was agreeable. Little stars speckled a mauve and misty sky, and out of the mysterious spring twilight there

came a strange and ultimate yearning, a craving which nothing she had ever known could assuage. But those stars—could they tell her nothing? One, large almost as the moon itself, flamed up in the sky, and a voice within her whispered that that was her star, that it held the secret of her destiny. She gazed till her father called to her from the gate; and all that evening she could think of nothing else. The conviction flowed within her that the secret of her destiny was there; and as she lay in bed the star seemed to take a visible shape.

A face rose out of the gulf beneath her. She could not distinguish whether it was the face of man or woman; it was an idea rather than a face. The ears were turned to her for her to take the earrings, the throat was deeply curved, the lips were large and rose-red, the eyes were nearly closed, and the hair was curled close over a straight, low forehead. The face rose up to hers. She looked into the subtle eyes, and the thrill of the lips, just touching hers, awakened a sense of sin, and her eyes when they opened were frightened and weary. And as she sat up in her bed, trembling, striving vainly to separate the real from the unreal, she saw the star still shining. She hid her face in the pillow, and was only calmed by the thought that it was watching her.

She went into the garden every evening to see it rise, and a desire of worship grew up in her heart; and thinking of the daffodils, it occurred to her to lay these flowers on the wall as an offering. Even wilder thoughts passed through her brain; she could not keep them back, and more than once asked herself if she were giving way to an idolatrous intention. If so, she would

have to tell the foolish story to her confessor. But she could hardly bring herself to tell him such nonsense. . . . If she didn't, the omission might make her confession a false one; and she was so much perplexed that it seemed to her as if the devil took the opportunity to insinuate that she might put off going to confession. This decided her. She resolved to combat the Evil One. To-day was Thursday. She would confess on Saturday, and go to Communion on Sunday.

Till quite lately her confessor had been Father Knight—a tall, spare, thin-lipped, aristocratic ecclesiastic, in whom Evelyn had expected to find a romantic personality. She had looked forward to thrilling confessions, but had been disappointed. The romance his appearance suggested was not borne out; he seemed unable to take that special interest in her which she desired; her confessions were barren of spiritual adventure, and after some hesitations her choice dropped upon Father Railston. In this selection the law of contrast played an important part. The men were very opposites. One walked erect and tall, with measured gait; the other walked according to the impulse of the moment, wearing his *biretta* either on one side of the head or the other. One was reserved; the other voluble in speech. One was of handsome and regular features; the other's face was plain but expressive. Evelyn had grown interested in Father Railston's dark, melancholy eyes; and his voice was a human voice vibrant with the terror and suffering of life. In listening to her sins he seemed to remember his own. She had accused herself of impatience at the circumstances which kept her at home, of even nourishing, she would not say projects, but thoughts, of escape.

"Then, my child, are you so anxious to change your present life for that of the stage?"

"Yes, Father."

"You weary of the simplicity of your present life, and sigh for the brilliancy of the stage?"

"I'm afraid I do." It was thrilling to admit so much, especially as the life of an actress was not in itself sinful. "I feel that I should die very soon if I were to hear I should never leave Dulwich."

The priest did not speak for a long while, and raising her eyes, she watched his expression. It seemed to her that her confession of her desire of the world had recalled memories, and she wondered what were they.

"I am more than forty—I'm nearly fifty—and my life has passed like a dream."

He seemed about to tell her the secret of life, and had stopped. But the phrase lingered through her whole life, and eventually became part of it. "My life has passed like a dream." She did not remember what he had said after, and she had gone away wondering if life seemed to everyone like a dream when they were forty, and if his life would have seemed more real to him if he had given it to the world instead of to God? Her subsequent confessions seemed trite and commonplace. Not that Father Railston failed to listen with kind interest to her; not that he failed to divine that she was passing through a physical and spiritual crisis. His admonitions were comforting in her weariness of mind and body; but notwithstanding her affection for him, she felt that beyond that one phrase he had no influence over her. She almost felt that he was too gentle and

indulgent, and she thought she would have liked a confessor who was severe, who would have inflicted heavier penances, compelled her to fast and pray, who would have listened in deeper sternness to the sins of thought which she with averted face shamefully owned to having entertained. She was disappointed that he did not warn her with the loss of her soul, that he did not invent specious expedients for her use, whereby the Evil One might be successfully checked.

One Sunday morning the servant told Mr. Innes that Miss Evelyn had left a little earlier, as she was going to Communion. She remained in church for High Mass, and when chided for such long abstinence, she smiled sadly and said that she did not think that it would do her much harm. During the following week he noticed that she hardly touched breakfast, and the only reason she gave was that she thought she would like to fast. No, she had not obtained leave from her confessor; she had not even consulted him. She, of course, knew that she was not obliged to fast, not being of age; but she was not doing any work; she had no pupils; the concert had been postponed; she thought she would like to fast. Father and daughter looked at each other; they felt that they did not understand, that there was nothing to be done, and Mr. Innes put his fiddle into its case and went to London, deeply concerned about his daughter, and utterly unable to arrive at any conclusion.

She fasted, and she broke through her fast, and as Lent drew to a close she asked her father if she might make a week's retreat in a convent at Wimbledon where she had some friends. There was no need for her at home; it would be at least change of air, and she

pressed him to allow her to go. He feared the influence the convent might have upon her, and admitted that his selfishness was largely accountable for this religious reaction. No doubt she wanted change, she was looking very poorly. He spoke of the sea, but who was to take her to Brighton or Margate? The convent seemed the only solution of the difficulty, and he had to consent to her departure.

The retreat was to last four days, but Evelyn begged that she might stay on till Easter Tuesday. This would give her a clear week away from home, and the improvement that this little change wrought in her was surprising. The convent had made her cheeks fair as roses, and given her back all her sunny happiness and abundant conversation. She delighted in telling her father of her week's experience. For four days she had not spoken (perhaps that was the reason she was talking so much now), and during these four days they were nearly always in chapel; but somehow it hadn't seemed long, the services were so beautiful. The nuns wore grey serge robes and head-dresses, the novices white head-dresses; what had struck her most was the expression of happy content on their faces.

"I wish, father, you had seen them come into church—their long robes and beautiful white faces. I don't think there is anything as beautiful as a nun."

The mother prioress was a small woman, with an eager manner. She looked so unimportant that Evelyn had wondered why she had been chosen, but the moment she spoke you came under the spell of her keen, grey eyes and clear voice. . . . Mother Philippa, the mistress of the novices, was quite different—stout and

middle-aged, and she wore spectacles. She was beautiful notwithstanding; her goodness was like a soft light upon her face. . . . Evelyn paused. She could not find words to describe her; at last she said,—

“When she comes into the room, I always feel happy.”

She could not say which she liked the better, but branched off into a description of the Carmelite who had given the retreat—a strong, eagle-faced man, with thin hair drawn back from his forehead, and intense eyes. He wore sandals, and his white frock was tied with a leather belt, and every word he spoke had entered into her heart. He gave the meditations, which were held in the darkened library. They could not see each other's faces; they could only see the white figure at the end of the room.

She had had her meals in the parlour with two other ladies who had come to the convent for the retreat. They were both elderly women, and Evelyn fancied that they belonged to the grandest society. She could tell that by their voices. The one she liked best had quite white hair, and her expression was almost that of a nun. She was tall, very stout, and walked with a stick. On Easter Sunday this old lady had asked her if she would care to come into the garden with her. It was such a beautiful morning, she said, that it would do both of them good. The old lady walked very slowly with her stick. But though Evelyn thought that she must be at least a countess, she did not think she was very rich—she had probably lost her money. The black dress she wore was thin and almost threadbare, and it was a little too long for her; she held it up in her left hand as she



walked—a most beautiful hand for an old woman. Both these ladies had been very kind to her; she had often walked with them in the garden—a fine old garden. There were tall, shady trees; these were sprinkled with the first tiny leaves; and the currant and raspberry bushes were all out. And there was a fishpond swarming with gold-fish, and they were so tame that they took bread from the novices' hands.

The conversation had begun about the convent, and after speaking of its good sisters, the old lady, whose hair was quite white, had asked Evelyn about herself. Had she ever thought of being a nun? Evelyn had answered that she had not. She had never considered the question whether she had a vocation. . . . She had been brought up to believe that she was going on the stage to sing grand opera.

“It is hardly for me to advise you. But I know how dangerous the life of an opera singer is. I shall pray God that He may watch over you. Promise me always to remember our holy religion. It is the only thing we have that is worth having; all the rest passes.”

“Father, we were close by the edge of the fishpond, and all the greedy fish swarmed to the surface, thinking we had come to feed them. She said, ‘I cannot walk further without resting; come, my dear, let me sit down on that bench, and do you sing me a little song, very low, so that no one shall hear you but I.’ I sang her ‘John, come kiss me now,’ and she said, ‘My dear, you have a beautiful voice, I pray that you make good use of it.’”

But not in one day could all Evelyn's convent experiences be related, and it was not until the end of the

week that Evelyn told how Mother Philippa, at the end of a long talk in which she had spoken to Evelyn about the impulses which had led her to embrace a religious life (she had been twenty years in this convent), had taken her upstairs to the infirmary to see Sister Bonaventure, an American girl, only twenty-one, who was dying of consumption. She lay on a couch in grey robes, her hands and face waxen white, and a smile of happy resignation on her lips and in her eyes.

“But,” exclaimed Evelyn, “they told me she would die within the fortnight, so she may be dead now; if not to-day, to-morrow or after. I hadn’t thought of that. . . . I shall never forget her, every few minutes she coughed—that horrible cough! I thought she was going to die before my eyes, but in the intervals she chattered and even laughed, and no word of complaint escaped her. She was only twenty-one . . . had known nothing of life; all was unknown to her, except God, and she was going to Heaven. She seemed quite happy, yet to me it seemed the saddest sight in the world. . . . She’ll be buried in a few days in the sunniest corner of the garden, away from the house—that is their graveyard. The mother Prioress, the founder of the convent, is buried there; a little dedicatory chapel has been built, and on the green turf, tall wooden crosses mark the graves of six nuns; next week there’ll be one more cross.”

The conversation paused, and Evelyn sat looking into the corner of the room, her large clear eyes wide open and fixed. Presently she said,—

“Father, I’ve often thought I should like to be a nun.”

“You a nun! And with that voice!”

She looked at him, smiling a little.

“What matter?”

“What matter! Have you not thought—but I understand; you mean that your voice is wasted here, that we shall never have the means to go abroad. . . . But we shall.”

“Father, dear, I wasn’t thinking of that. I do believe that means will be found to send me abroad to study. But what then? Shall I be happy?”

“Fame, fortune, art!”

“Those nuns have none of those things, and they are happy. As that old lady said, their happiness comes from within.”

“And you’ll be happy with those things, as happy as they are without them. You’re in a melancholy mood; come, we’ll think of the work before us. I’ve decided that we give our concert the week after next. That will give us ten clear days.”

He entered into the reasons which had induced him to give this concert. But Evelyn had heard all about the firm of musical publishers, who possibly might ask him to bring up the old instruments to London, and give a concert in a fashionable West-end hall. Seeing that she was not listening, he broke off his narrative with the remark that he had received a letter that morning from Sir Owen.

“Is he coming home? I thought he was going round the world and would not be back for a year.”

“He has changed his mind. This letter was posted at Malta—a most interesting letter it is;” and while Mr. Innes read Sir Owen’s account of the discovery of the musical text of an ancient hymn which had been unearthed in his presence, Evelyn wondered if he had

come home for her or—the thought entered her heart with a pang—if he had come home for the red-haired woman. Mr. Innes stopped suddenly in his reading, and asked her of what she was thinking.

“Nothing, father.”

“You don’t seem to take any interest. The text is incomplete, and some notes have been conjecturally added by a French musician.” But much more interesting to Evelyn was his account of the storm that had overtaken his yacht on the coast of Asia Minor. He had had to take his turn at the helm, all the sailors being engaged at the sails, and, with the waves breaking over him, he had kept her head to the wind for more than two hours.

“I can hardly fancy him braving the elements, can you, Evelyn?”

“I don’t know, father,” she said, startled by the question, for at that moment she had seen him in imagination as clearly as if he were present. She had seen him leaning against the door-post, a half-cynical, half-kindly smile floating through his gold moustache. “Do you think he will like the music you are going to give at the next concert? He is coming, I suppose?”

“It is just possible he may arrive in time; but I should hardly think so. I’ve written to invite him; he’ll like the music; it is the most interesting programme we’ve had—an unpublished sonata by Bach—one of the most interesting, too. If that is not good enough for him—by the way, have you looked through that sonata?”

“No, father, but I will do so this afternoon.”

And while practising the sonata, Evelyn felt as if life had begun again. The third movement of the sonata

was an exquisite piece of musical colour, and, if she played it properly, he could not fail to come and congratulate her. . . . But he would not be here in time for the concert . . . not unless he came straight through, and he would not do that after having nearly escaped shipwreck. She was sure he would not arrive in time, but the possibility that he might gave her additional interest in the sonata, and every day, all through the week, she discovered more and more surprising beauties in it.

#### IV.

SHE was alone in the music-room reading a piece of music, and her back was to the door when he entered. She hardly recognised him, tired and tossed as he was by long journeying, and his grey travelling suit was like a disguise.

“Is that you, Sir Owen? . . . You’ve come back?”

“Come back, yes, I have come back. I travelled straight through from Marseilles, a pretty stiff journey . . . We were nearly shipwrecked off Marseilles.”

“I thought it was off the coast of Asia Minor?”

“That was another storm. We have had rough weather lately.”

The music dropped from her hand, and she stood looking at him, for he stood before her like an ancient seafarer. His grey tweed suit buttoned tightly about him set off every line of his spare figure. His light brown hair was tossed all over his head, and she could not reconcile this rough traveller with the elegant fribble whom she had hitherto known as Sir Owen. But she

liked him in this grey suit, dusty after long travel. He was picturesque and remote as a legend. A smile was on his lips; it showed through the frizzled moustache, and his eyes sparkled with pleasure at sight of her.

"But why did you travel straight through? You might have slept at Marseilles or Paris."

"One of these days I will tell you about the gale. I wonder I am not at the bottom of that treacherous sea; it did blow my poor old yacht about—I thought it was her last cruise; and when we got to the hotel I was handed your father's letter. As I did not want to miss the concert, I came straight through."

"You must be very fond of music."

"Yes, I am. . . . Music can be heard anywhere, but your voice can only be heard at Dulwich."

"Was it to hear me sing that you came back?"

She had spoken unawares, and felt that the question was a foolish one, and was trembling lest he should be inwardly laughing at her. But the earnest expression into which his little grey eyes concentrated reassured her. She seemed to lose herself a little, to drift into a sort of dream in which even he seemed to recede, and so intense and personal was her sensation that she could not follow his tale of adventure. It was an effort to listen to it at that moment, and she said,—

"But you must be tired, you've not had a proper night's sleep . . . for a week."

"I'm not very tired, I slept in the train, but I'm hungry. I've not had anything since ten o'clock this morning. There was no time to get anything at Victoria. I was told that the next train for Dulwich started in five minutes. I left my valet to take my trunks home; he

will bring my evening clothes on here for the concert. Can you let me have a room to dress in?"

"Of course; but you must have something to eat."

"I thought of going round to the inn and having a chop."

"We had a beefsteak pudding for dinner; I wonder if you could eat beefsteak pudding?"

"There's nothing better."

"Warmed up?"

"Yes, warmed up."

"Then I may run and tell Margaret?"

"I shall be much obliged if you will."

She liked to wait upon him, and her pleasure quickened when she handed him bread or poured out ale, making it foam in the glass, for refreshment after his long journey; and when she sat opposite, her eyes fixed on him, and he told her his tale of adventure, her happy flushed face reminded him of that exquisite promise, the pink almond blossom showing through the wintry wood.

"So you didn't believe me when I said that it was to hear you sing that I came back?"

"That you renounced your trip round the world?"

"Yes, I renounced my trip round the world to hear you sing."

She did not answer, and he put the question again.

"I can understand that there might be sufficient reason for your giving up your trip round the world. I thought that perhaps—no, I cannot say—"

They had been thinking of each other, and had taken up their interest in each other at their last thoughts rather than at their last words. She was more conscious of the reason of their sudden intimacy than he was, but

he too felt that they had advanced a long way in their knowledge of each other, and their intuition was so much in advance of facts that they sat looking at each other embarrassed, their words unable to keep pace with their perceptions.

Evelyn suddenly felt as if she were being borne forward, but at that moment her father entered.

"Father, Sir Owen was famishing when he arrived. He wanted to go to the inn and eat a chop, but I persuaded him to stop and have some beefsteak pudding."

"I am so glad . . . you've arrived just in time, Sir Owen. The concert is to-night."

"He came straight through without stopping; he has not been home. So, father, you will never be able to say again that your concerts are not appreciated."

"Well, I don't think that you will be disappointed, Sir Owen. This is one of the most interesting programmes we have had. You remember Ferrabosco's pavane which you liked so much—"

Margaret announced the arrival of Sir Owen's valet, and while Mr. Innes begged of Sir Owen not to put himself to the trouble of dressing, Owen wondered at his own folly in yielding to a sudden caprice to see the girl. However, he did not regret; she was a prettier girl than he had thought, and her welcome was the pleasantest thing that had happened to him for many a day.

"My poor valet, I am afraid, is quite *hors de combat*. He was dreadfully ill while we were beating up against that gale, and the long train journey has about finished him. At Victoria he looked more dead than alive."

Evelyn went out to see this pale victim of sea-sickness and expedition. She offered him dinner and then



tea, but he said he had had all he could eat at the refreshment bars, and struggled upstairs with the port-manteau of his too exigent master.

A few of her guests had already arrived, and Evelyn was talking to Father Railston when Sir Owen came into the room.

"I shall not want you again to-night," he said, turning towards the door to speak to his valet. "Don't sit up for me, and don't call me to-morrow before ten."

She had not yet had time to speak to Owen of a dream which she had dreamed a few nights before, and in which she was much interested. She had seen him borne on the top of a huge wave, clinging to a piece of wreckage, alone in the solitary circle of the sea. But Owen, when he came downstairs dressed for the concert, looked no longer like a seafarer. He wore an embroidered waistcoat, his necktie was tied in a butterfly bow, and the three pearl studs, which she remembered, fastened the perfectly-fitting shirt. She was a little disappointed, and thought that she liked him better in the rough grey suit, with his hair tossed, just come out of his travelling cap. Now it was brushed about his ears, and it glistened as if from some application of brillian-tine or other toilet essence. Now he was more prosaic, but he had been extraordinarily romantic when he ran in to see her, his grey travelling cap just snatched from his head. It was then she should have told him her dream. All this was a very faint impression, half humorous, half regretful, it passed, almost without her being aware of it, in the background of her mind. But she was keenly disappointed that he was not impressed by her dream, and was inclined to consider it in the light

of a mere coincidence. In the first place, he hadn't been shipwrecked, and that she should dream of shipwreck was most natural since she knew that he had gone a-seafaring, and any gust of wind in the street was enough to excite the idea of a castaway in the unclosed cellular tissues of her brain. She did not answer, and he stood trying to force an answer from her, but she could not, nor did she wish to think that her dream was no more than a merely physiological phenomenon. But just at that moment Mr. Innes was waiting to speak to Sir Owen.

He had a great deal to say on the subject of the disgraceful neglect of the present Royal Family in not publishing the works of their single artistic ancestor, Henry VIII. Up to the present time none of his numerous writings, except one anthem played in the Chapel at Windsor, was known; the pieces that were going to be played that evening lay in MS. in the British Museum, and had probably not been heard for two, maybe three hundred years. Encouraged by Sir Owen's sympathy, he referred again, in his speech to his audience, to the indifference of the present Royal Family to art, and he added that it was strange that he should be doing at Dowlands what the Queen or the Prince of Wales should have done long ago, namely, the publication of their ancestor's work with all the prestige that their editorship or their patronage could give it.

"I must go," she said; "they are waiting for me."

She took her place among the viol players and began playing; but she had forgotten to tune her instrument, and her father stopped the performance. She looked at him, a little frightened, and laughed at her mistake. The piece they were playing was by

Henry VIII., a masterpiece, Mr. Innes had declared it to be, so, to stop the performance on account of Evelyn's viola da gamba, and then to hear her play worse than he had ever heard her play before, was very disappointing.

"What is the matter? Aren't you well? I never heard you play so badly."

He hoped that she would play better in the next piece, and he besought her with a look before he signed to the players to begin. She resolved not to think of Owen, and she played so well that the next piece was applauded. Except for her father's sake she cared very little how she played; she tried to play well to please him, but she was anxious to sing well—she was singing for herself and for Owen, which was the same thing—and she sang beautifully in the King's madrigal and the two songs accompanied by the lute—"I loathe what I did love," and "My lytell pretty one," both anonymous, composed in 1520, and discovered by Mr. Innes in the British Museum. The musical interest of these two songs was slight, and Owen reflected that all Mr. Innes's discoveries at the British Museum were not of equal importance. But she had sung divinely, and he thought how he should praise her at the end of the concert.

Evelyn hoped he would tell her that she had sung better than she had sung on the fatal night of the party in Berkeley Square. This was what she wished him to say, and she wished it partly because she knew that that was what he would say. That party had not yet been spoken of, but she felt sure it would be, for it seemed a decisive point in their lives.

She was not playing in the next two pieces—fantasies for treble and tenor viols—and she sat in the background, catching glimpses of Owen between the hands and the heads of the viol players, and over the rims of their instruments. She sat apart, not hearing a note of the music, absorbed in herself, a little exaltation afloat in her brain, her flesh glowing as in the warmth of an inward fire, her whole instinct telling her that Owen had not come back for the red-haired woman; he had gone away for her, perhaps, but he had not come back for her—of that she was sure. In spite of herself, the conviction was forced upon her that the future was for her. The red-haired lady was a past which he would tell her some day, and that day she knew to be not very far distant.

The programme was divided into two parts, and after the first, there was a little interval during which tea and cake were handed round. Evelyn helped to hand them round, and when she held the cake-tray to Owen, she raised her eyes and they looked at each other, and in that interval it almost seemed as if they kissed each other.

They met again at the end of the concert, and she waited anxiously for him to speak. He told her, as she expected he would, that she had sung to-night much better than she had sung at his party. But they were surrounded by people seeking their coats and umbrellas; it was impossible to speak without being overheard; he had told her that she had sung to his satisfaction; that was sufficient, and they felt that all had been said, and that they understood each other perfectly.

As she lay in bed, the thought came that he might

write to her a letter asking her to meet him, to keep an appointment. But she would have to refuse, it would be wrong; but it was not wrong to think about it. He would be there before her; the moment he saw her coming his eyes would light up in a smile, and they would walk on together some little way without speaking. Then he would say, "Dearest, there will be a carriage waiting at the corner of the road"—and then? She could see his face and his tall, thin figure, she could picture it all so distinctly that it was almost the same as if it were happening. All he said, as well as all she said, kept pouring in upon her brain without a missing word, and she hugged herself in the delight of these imaginings, and the hours went by without weariness for her. She lay, her arms folded, thinking, thinking, seeing him through the darkness.

He came to see them the following day. Her father was there all the time, but to hear and see him was almost enough for her. She seemed to lose sight of everything and to be engulfed in her own joy. When he had gone away she remembered the smile which had lit up some pretty thought of her; her ears were full of his voice, and she heard the lilt that charmed her whenever she pleased. Then she asked herself the meaning of some casual remark, and her mind repeated all he had said like a phonograph. She already knew his habitual turns of speech; they had begun to appear in her own conversation, and all that was not connected with him lost interest for her. Once or twice during the week she went to bed early so that she might not fancy her father was looking at her while she thought of Owen.

Owen called at the end of the week—the *Wagnerian Review* always supplied him with sufficient excuse for a visit—but he had to spend his visit in discussing the text of a Greek hymn which he had seen disinterred in Greece. She was sorry for him, sorrier than she was for herself, for she could always find him in her thoughts. . . . She wondered if he could find her as vividly in his thoughts as she 'settled herself (the next day was Sunday) in the corner of her pew, resolved from the beginning not to hear a word of the sermon, but to think of Owen the whole time. She wanted to hear why he had left England so suddenly, and why he had returned so suddenly. She was sure that she and the red-haired lady were the cause of one or the other, and that neither was the cause of both. These two facts served for a warp upon which she could weave endless mental embroideries, tales as real as the tales of old tapestry, tales of love and jealousy, and unexpected meetings, in which she and Owen and the red-haired lady met and re-met. Whilst Father Railston was preaching, these tales flowed on and on, subtle as silk, illusive as evening tinted clouds; and it was not until she had exhausted her fancy, and Owen had made one more fruitless visit to Dulwich, that she began to scheme how she might see him alone. There was so much that they could only talk about if they were alone; and then she wanted so much to hear the story of the red-haired lady. If she did not contrive an opportunity for being with him alone, she might never hear why he had left England for a trip round the world, and had returned suddenly from the Mediterranean. She felt that, however difficult and however wrong it might be, she

must find this opportunity. She thought of asking him the hour of the train by which he generally came to Dulwich, so that she might meet him in the station. Other schemes came into her mind, but she could think of nothing that was just right.

But one day, as she was running to post a letter, she saw Owen, more beautifully dressed than ever, coming toward her. Her feet and her heart stood still, for she wore her old morning gown and a pair of old house slippers. But he had already seen her and was lifting his hat, and with easy effrontery he told her that he had come to Dulwich to consult her father about the Greek hymn.

"But father is at St. Joseph's," she said, and then she stopped; and then, before she saw his smile, she knew why he had come to Dulwich so early.

The shadows of the leaves on the pavement drew a pretty pattern for their feet, and they strolled meditatively through the subdued sunlight.

"Why did you stop and look so startled when you saw me?"

"Because I am so badly dressed; my old house slippers and this—"

"You look very well—dress matters nothing."

"No one would gather your opinions from your appearance."

Owen laughed, and admired the girl's wit.

"Do you want to see father very much about the Greek hymn?"

"Well," he said, and he looked at her questioningly, and not liking to tell her in so many words that he had come to Dulwich to see her, he entered into the ques-

tion of the text of the hymn, which was imperfect. Many notes were missing, and had been conjecturally added by a French musician, and he had wished to consult Mr. Innes about them. So a good deal of time was wasted in conversation in which neither was interested. Before they were aware, they were at Dowlands, and with an accent of regret in her voice, which Owen noticed with pleasure, she held out her hand and said good-bye.

“Are you very busy, then, are you expecting a pupil?”

“No, I have nothing to do.”

“Then why should we say good-bye? It is hardly worth while getting up so early in the morning to discuss the text of an ancient Greek hymn.”

His frankness was unexpected, and it pleased her.

“No, I don’t suppose it is; Greek music at eleven o’clock in the morning would be a little trying.”

A delicious sense of humour lit up in her eyes, and he felt his interest in her advance a further stage.

“If you have nothing to do we might go to the picture gallery. There is a wonderful Watteau—”

“Watteau at eleven, Greek hymn at one.”

But she felt, all the same, that she would give everything to go to the picture gallery with him.

“But I am not dressed, this is an old thing I wear in the morning; not that there would be many people there, only the curator and a girl copying at eleven in the morning.”

“But is your father coming back at one?”

“Why do you ask?”

“Because you said Greek hymn at one. The time



will pass quickly between eleven and one. You need not change your dress."

Then, with an expressive little glance which went straight to his heart, she noted his fastidious dress, the mauve necktie, the perfectly fitting morning coat buttoned across the chest, the yellow-brown trousers, and the long laced boots, half of patent and half of tan-coloured leather.

"I could not walk about with you in this dress and hat, but I sha'n't keep you long."

While he waited, he congratulated himself on the moment when he had determined to abandon his tour round the world, and come back to seek Evelyn Innes at Dulwich.

"She is much nicer, a hundred times more exciting than I thought. Poetry, sympathy, it is like living in a dream." He asked himself if he liked her better than Georgina, and answered himself that he did; but deep down in his heart he knew that the other woman had given him deeper and more poignant emotions, and he knit his brows, for he hated Georgina.

Owen was the first temptation in Evelyn's life, and it carried her forward with the force of a swirling river. She tried to think, but thoughts failed her, and she hooked her black cloth skirt and thrust her arms into her black cloth jacket with puffed sleeves. She opened her wardrobe, and wondered which hat he would like, chose one, and hastened downstairs.

"You've not been long . . . you look very nice. Yes, that is an improvement."

His notice of her occasioned in her a little flutter of joy, a little exaltation of the senses, and she walked on

without speaking, deep in her pleasure, and as the sensation died she became aware that she was very happy. The quiet silence of the spring morning corresponded to her mood, and the rustle of last year's leaves communicated a delicious emotion which seemed to sing in the currents of her blood, and a little madness danced in her brain at the ordinary sight of nature. "This way," she said, and they turned into a lane which almost looked like country. There were hedges and fields; and the sunlight dozed amid the cows, and over the branches of the high elm the spring was already shaking a soft green dust. There were nests in the bare boughs—whether last year's or this year's was not certain. Further on there was a stile, and she thought that she would like to lean upon it and look straight through the dim fields, gathering the meaning which they seemed to express. She wondered if Owen felt as she did, if he shared her admiration of the sunlight which fell about the stile through the woven branches, making round white spots on the roadway.

"So you were surprised to hear that I had given up my trip round the world?"

"I was surprised to hear you had given it up so that you might hear me sing."

"You think a man incapable of giving up anything for a woman?"

He was trembling, and his voice was confused; experience did not alter him; on the verge of an avowal he was nervous as a schoolboy. He watched to see if she were moved, but she did not seem to be; he waited for her to contest the point he had raised, but her reply, which was quite different, took him aback.

“You say you came back to hear me sing. Was it not for another woman that you went away?”

“Yes, but how did you know?”

“The woman with the red hair who was at your party?”

The tale of a past love affair often served Owen as a plank of transition to another. He told her the tale. It seemed to him extraordinary because it had happened to him, and it seemed to Evelyn very extraordinary, because it was her first experience of the ways of love.

“Then it was she who got tired of you? Why did she get tired of you?”

“Why anything? Why did she fall in love with me?”

“Is it, then, the same thing?”

He judged it necessary to dissemble, and he advanced the theory which he always made use of on these occasions—that women were more capricious than men, that so far as his experience counted for anything, he had invariably been thrown over. The object of this theory was twofold. It impressed his listener with an idea of his fidelity, which was essential if she were a woman. It also suggested that he had inspired a large number of caprices, thereby he gratified his vanity and inspired hope in the lady that as a lover he would prove equal to her desire. It also helped to establish the moral atmosphere in which an intrigue might develop.

“Did you love her very much?”

“Yes, I was crazy about her. If I hadn't been, should I have rushed off in my old yacht for a tour round the world?”

He felt the light of romance fall upon him, and this, he thought, was how he ought to appear to her.

Yet he was sincere. He admired Evelyn, he thought he might like to be her lover, and he regarded their present talk as a necessary subterfuge, the habitual comedy in which we live. So, when Evelyn asked him if he still loved Georgina, he answered that he hated her, which was only partly true; and when she asked him if he would go back to her if she were to invite him, he said that nothing in the world would induce him to do so, which was wholly untrue, though he would not admit it to himself. He knew that if Georgina were to hold up her little finger he would leave Evelyn without a second thought, however foolish he might know such conduct to be.

“Why did you not marry her when she was in love with you?”

“You can love a woman very well indeed without wanting to marry her; besides, she is married. But are you sure we’re going right? . . . Is this the way to the picture gallery?”

“Oh, the picture gallery, I had forgotten. We have passed it a long while.”

They turned and went back, and, in the silence, Owen considered if he had not been too abrupt. His dealings with women had always been conducted with the same honour that characterised his dealings on the turf, but he need not have informed her so early in their acquaintanceship of his vow of celibacy. While he thought how he might retrieve his slight indiscretion, she struggled in a little crisis of soul. Owen’s words, tone of voice, manner were explicit; she could not doubt that

he hoped to induce her to leave her father, and she felt that she ought not to see him any more. She must see him, she must go out to walk with him, and her will fluttered like a feather in space. She remembered with a gasp that he was the only thing between herself and Dulwich, and at the same moment he decided that he could not do better than to suggest to her that her father was sacrificing her to his ambitions.

"I wonder," he said, assuming a meditative air, "what will become of you? Eventually, I mean."

"What do you think?" Her eagerness told him that he had struck the right note.

"You have grown up in an atmosphere of great music, far removed from the tendencies of our day. You have received from your father an extraordinary musical education. He has prepared you on all points but one for your career, he has not developed your voice; his ambition intervened—"

"You must not say that. Father does not allow his ambition to interfere with his duties regarding me. You only think that because you do not know him; you don't know all the difficulties he has to contend with."

Owen smiled inwardly, pleased at the perception he had shown in divining her feelings, and he congratulated himself on having sown some slight seed of discontent; and then, as if he were withdrawing, or at least attenuating, the suggestion he had thrown out, he said,—

"Anyone can see that you and your father are very attached to each other."

"Can they?"

"You always like to be near him, and your favourite attitude is with your hand on his shoulder."

“So many people have noticed that. Yes, I am very fond of father. We were always very fond of each other, but now we are more like pals than father and daughter.”

He encouraged her to talk of herself, to tell him the story of her childhood, and how she and her father formed this great friendship. Evelyn's story of her mother's death would have interested him if he had been able to bestow sufficient attention upon it, but the intricacy of the intrigue he was entering upon engrossed his thoughts. There were her love of her father, her duty towards him, and her piety to be overcome. Against these three considerable influences there were her personal ambition and her love of him. A very evenly matched game, he thought, and for nothing in the world would he have missed this love adventure.

At that moment the words, “A few days later she died,” caught on his ear. So he called all the sorrow and reverence he could into his eyes, sighed, and raised his eyebrows expressing such philosophic resignation in our mortal lot as might suffice to excuse a change in the conversation.

“That is the picture gallery,” Evelyn said, pointing to a low brick building, almost hidden at the back of a well-kept garden. The unobtrusive doorway was covered with a massive creeper, just beginning to emerge from its winter's rust. “Do you care to go in?” she said negligently.

“You know the pictures so well, I am afraid they will bore you.”

“No, I should like to see them with you.”

He could see that her æsthetic taste had been ab-

sorbed by music, and that pictures meant nothing to her, but they meant a great deal to him, and, unable to resist the temptation, he said,—

“Let us go in for a little while, though it does seem a pity to waste this beautiful spring day.”

There was an official who took her parasol and his cane, and they were impressed by the fact of having to write their names side by side in the book—Sir Owen Asher, Evelyn Innes.

On pushing through the swing-door, they found themselves in a small room hung with the Dutch school. There were other rooms, some four or five, opening one into the other, and lighted so that the light fell sideways on to the pictures. Owen praised the architecture. It was, he said, the most perfectly-constructed little gallery he had ever seen, and he ought to know, for he had seen every gallery in Europe. But he had not been here for many years and had quite forgotten it. “A veritable radiation of masterpieces,” he said, stepping aside to see one. But the girl was the greater attraction, and only half satisfied he returned to her, and when the attraction of the pictures grew irresistible, he tried to engage her attention in their beauties, so that he might be allowed to enjoy them. To his surprise and pleasure the remarks he had hazarded provoked an extraordinary interest in her, and she begged of him to tell her more about the paintings. He was not without a suspicion that the pictures were a secondary interest; but as it was clear that to hear him talk excited her admiration, he favoured her with all he knew regarding the Dutch school. She followed attentive as a peahen, he spreading a gorgeous tail of accumulated information.

He asked if the dark background in Cuypp's picture, "The White Horse and the Riding School," was not admirable? And that old woman peeling onions in her little kitchen, painted by a modern would be realistic and vulgar; but the Dutchman knew that by light and shade the meanest subject could be made as romantic as a fairy tale. As dreamers and thinkers they did not compare with the Italians, but as painters they were equal to any. They were the first to introduce the trivialities of daily life into Art—the toil of the field, the gross pleasures of the tavern. "Look at these boors drinking; they are by Ostade. Are they not admirably drawn and painted? 'Brick-making in a Landscape, by Teniers the younger.' Won't you look at this? How beautiful! How interesting is its grey sky! Here are a set of pictures by Wouvermans—pictures of hawking. Here is a Brouwer, a very rare Dutch master, a very fine example too. And here is a Gerard Dow. Miss Innes, will you look at this composition? Is it not admirable? That rich curtain hung across the room, how beautifully painted, how sonorous in colour."

"Ah! she's playing a virginal!" said Evelyn, suddenly. "She is like me, playing and thinking of other things. You can see she is not thinking of the music. She is thinking . . . she is thinking of the world outside."

This pleased him, and he said, "Yes, I suppose it is like your life; it is full of the same romance and mystery."

"What romance, what mystery? Tell me."

They sat down on the bench in the third room, opposite the colonnade by Watteau, to which his thoughts



frequently went, while telling her how, when cruising among the Greek Islands, he had often seen her, sometimes sitting in the music-room playing the virginal, sometimes walking in the ornamental park under a wet, grey sky, a somewhat desolate figure hurrying through shadows of storm.

"How strange you should think all that. It is quite true. I often walked in that hateful park."

"You will never be able to stand another winter in Dulwich."

She raised her eyes, and he noticed with an inward glee their little, frightened look.

"I thought of you in that ornamental park watching London from the crest of the hill; and I thought of London—great, unconscious London—waiting to be awakened with the chime of your voice."

She turned her head aside, overcome by his praise, and he exulted, seeing the soft rose tint mount into the whiteness of her face.

"You must not say such things to me. How you do know how to praise!"

"You don't realise how wonderful you are."

"You should not say such things, for if they are not true, I shall be so miserable."

"Of course they are true," he said, hushing his voice; and in his exultation there was a savour of cruelty. "You don't realise how wonderful your story is. As I sailed through the Greek Isles, I thought less and less of that horrid, red-haired woman; your face, dim at first, grew clearer and clearer. . . . All my thoughts, all things converged to you and were absorbed in you, until, one day on the deck, I felt that you were unhappy; the

knowledge came, how and whence I know not; I only know that the impulse to return was irresistible. I called to the skipper, and told him to put her head about."

"Then you did think of me whilst you were away?"

Evelyn looked at him with her soft, female eyes, and meeting his keen, bright, male eyes, she drew away from him with a little dread. Immediately after, this sensation of dread gave way to a delicious joy; an irresponsible joy deep down in her heart, a joy so intimate that she was thankful to know that none could know it but herself.

Her woman's instinct told her that many women had loved him. She suspected that the little lilt in his voice, and the glance that accompanied it, were the relics of an old love affair. She hoped it was not a survival of Georgina.

"It must be nearly one o'clock. It is time for you to come to talk to father about the Greek hymn."

"Let's look at this picture first—'The *Fête* beneath the Colonnade'—it is one of the most beautiful things in the world."

## V.

SIPPING her coffee, her feet on the fender, she abandoned herself to memories of the afternoon. She had been to the Carmelite Church in Kensington, to hear the music of a new and very realistic Belgian composer; and, walking down the High Street after Mass, she and Owen had argued his artistic intentions. At the end of the High Street, he had proposed that they should walk in the Gardens. The broad walk was full of the colour

of spring and its perfume, the thick grass was like a carpet beneath their feet; they had lingered by a pond, and she had watched the little yachts, carrying each a portent of her own success or failure. The Albert Hall curved over the tops of the trees, and sheep strayed through the deep May grass in Arcadian peacefulness; but the most vivid impression was when they had come upon a lawn stretching gently to the water's edge. Owen had feared the day was too cold for sitting out, but at that moment the sun contradicted him with a broad, warm gleam. He had fetched two chairs from a pile stacked under a tree, and sitting on that lawn, swept by the shadow of softly moving trees, they had talked an hour or more. The scene came back to her as she sat looking into the fire. She saw the spring, easily victorious amid the low bushes, capturing the rough branches of the elms one by one, and the distant slopes of the park, grey like a piece of faded tapestry. And as in a tapestry, the ducks came through the mist in long, pulsing flight, and when the day cleared the pea-fowl were seen across the water, sunning themselves on the high branches. While watching the spectacle of the spring, Owen had talked to Evelyn about herself, and now their entire conversation floated back, transposed into a higher key.

“I want your life to be a great success.”

“Do you think anyone's life can be that?”

“That is a long discussion; if we seek the bottom of things, none is less futile than another. But what passes for success, wealth and renown, are easily within your reach . . . . If it be too much trouble to raise your hand, let me shake the branches, and they'll fall into your lap.”

"I wonder if they would seem as precious to me when I had got them as they do now. Once I did not know what it was to despond, but I lost my pupils last winter, and everything seemed hopeless. I am not vain or egotistic; I do not pine for applause and wealth, but I should like to sing. . . . I've heard so much about my voice that I'm curious to know what people will think of it."

"Once I was afraid that you were without ambition, and were content to live unknown, a little suburban legend, a suburban might-have-been."

"That was long ago. . . . I've been thinking about myself a great deal lately. Something seems always crying within me, 'You're wasting your life; you must become a great singer and shine like a star in the world.'"

"That is the voice of vocation speaking within you, a voice that may not be disobeyed. It is what the swallows feel when the time for departure has come."

"Ah, yes, what the swallows feel."

"A yearning for that which one has never known, for distant places, for the sunshine which instinct tells us we must breathe."

"Oh, yes, that is it. I used to feel all that in the afternoons in that ornamental park. I used to stop in my walk, for I seemed to see far away, to perceive dimly as in a dream, another country."

"And since I came back have you wished to go away?"

"No . . . for you come to see me, and when I go out with you I'm amused."

"I'm afraid I do little to amuse you."

"You do a great deal—you lend me books. I never

cared to read, now I'm very fond of reading—and I think more.”

“Of what do you think?”

“You see, I never met anyone like you before. You've travelled; you've seen everything; you know everything and everyone. When you come I seem to see in you all the grand world of fashion.”

“Which you used to see far away as in a dream?”

“No, the world of fashion I did not think of till I saw you. Since you came back I have thought of it a little. You seem to express it somehow in your look and dress; and the men who nodded to you in Piccadilly, and the women who bowed to you, all wore the same look, and when they spoke they seemed to know all about you—where you were last summer, and where you are going to spend this autumn. Their friends are your friends; you're all like one family.”

“You're very observant. I never noticed the things you speak of, but no doubt it is so. But society is ready to receive you; society, believe me, is most anxious for you.”

After some pause she heard him say,—

“But you must not delay to go abroad and study.”

“Tell me, do you think the concerts will ever pay?”

“No, not in the sense of your requirements. Evelyn, since you ask me, I must speak the truth. Those concerts may come to pay their expenses, with a little over, but it is the veriest delusion to imagine that they will bring enough money to take you and your father abroad. Moreover, your father would have to resign his position at St. Joseph's, where he is required; there his mission

is. It is painful for me to tell you these things, but I cannot see you waste your life."

"What you say is quite true. . . . I've known it all along."

"Only you have shut your eyes to it."

"Yes, that's it."

"Don't look so frightened, Evelyn. It was better that you should be brought face to face with the truth. You'll have to go abroad and study."

"And my father! Don't advise me to leave him. I couldn't do that."

"Why make my task more difficult than it is? I wish to be honest. I should speak just the same, believe me, if your father were present. Is not our first duty towards ourselves? The rest is vague and uncertain, the development of our own faculties is, after all, that which is most sure. . . . I'm uttering no paradox when I say that we serve others best by considering our own interests. Let us suppose that you sacrifice yourself, that you dedicate your life to your father, that you do all that conventional morality says you should do. You look after his house, you sing at his concerts, you give music lessons. Ten, fifteen years pass, and then, remembering what might have been, but what is no longer possible, you forgive him, and he, overcome with remorse for the wrong he did you, sinks into the grave broken-hearted."

"I should at least have the satisfaction of knowing that I had done my duty."

"Words, Evelyn, words. Take your life into your keeping, go abroad and study, come back a great success."

"He would never forgive me."

"You do not think so. . . . Evelyn, you do not believe that."

"But even if I wished to leave home, I could not. Where should I get the money? You have not thought what it would cost."

"Have you forgotten the knight that came to release the sleeping beauty of the woods from her bondage? Fifteen hundred or two thousand pounds would be ample. I can easily afford it."

"But I cannot afford to accept it. Father would not allow me."

"You can pay it all back."

"Yes, I could do that. But why don't you offer to help father instead?"

"Why are you what you are? Why am I interested in you?"

"If I went abroad to study, I should not see you again for a long while—two years."

"I could go to Paris."

She did not remember what answer she had made, if she had made any answer, but as she leaned forward and stirred the fire, she saw his hands, their strength and comeliness, the kindness of his eyes. She was not sure that he was fond of her, but she thought that she could make him like her. At that moment he seemed to take her in his arms and kiss her, and the illusion was so vivid that she was taken in an instant's swoon, and shuddered through her entire flesh. When her thoughts returned she found herself thinking of a volume of verses which had come to be mentioned as they

walked through the Gardens. He had told her of the author, a Persian poet who had lived in a rose-garden a thousand years ago. He had compared life to a rose, an exquisite flower to be caught in the hand and enjoyed for a passionate moment, and had recited many of the verses, and she had listened, enchanted by the rapid interchange of sorrow, and gladness, and lofty resignation before the inevitable. Often it seemed as if her own soul were speaking in the verses. "So do not refuse to accept the flowers and fruit that hang in reach of your hands, for to-morrow you may be where there are none. . . . The caravan will have reached the nothing it set out from. . . . Surely the potter will not toss to hell the pots he marred in the making." She started from her reverie, and suddenly grew aware of his very words, "However we may strive to catch a glimpse of to-morrow, we must fall back on to-day as the only solid ground we have to stand on, though it be slipping momentarily from under our feet." She recalled the intonation of his sigh as he spoke of the inscrutable nature of things, and she wondered if he, too, with all his friends and possessions, was unhappy. She seemed to have exhausted her thoughts about him, and in the silence of her mind, her self came up for consideration. . . . Owen intended to ask her to go away with him; but he did not intend to marry her. It was shocking to think that he could be so wicked, and then with a thrill of pleasure that it would be much more exciting to run away with him than to be married to him by Father Railston. But how very wicked of her to think such things, and she was frightened to find that she could not think differently; and with sensations of an elopement clatter-



ing in her brain, she sat still striving to restrain her thoughts.

## VI.

ON leaving her at Victoria, he had walked down the Buckingham Palace Road, not quite knowing where he was going. Suddenly an idea struck him. He put up his stick, stopped a hansom, and drove to Georgina; for he was curious to see what impression she would make upon him. He spent an hour with her, and returned to Berkeley Square to dine alone. He was sure that he cared no more for Georgina, that she was less than nothing to him. He dismissed her from his thoughts, and fixed them on Evelyn. He had said he would send her a book. It stood next to his hand, on the shelf by the round table where he wrote his articles. After dinner, he would walk from the dining-room into the library, take down the volume and pack it up, leaving orders that it should be sent off by the first post.

When man ceased to capture women, he reflected, man invented art whereby he might win them. The first melody blown through a reed pipe was surely intended for woman's ears. The first verses were composed in a like intention. Afterwards man began to take an interest in art for its own sake. . . . Women, having no necessity for art, have not been artists. The idea amused him, and he remembered that while Evelyn's romantic eyes and gold hair were sufficient to win his regard, he had availed himself of a dozen devices to tempt her. Suddenly his face grew grave, and he asked himself how this flirtation was to end. As a sufficient

excuse for seeing her he was taking music lessons; he wrote to her every other day and often sent her books and music. They had met in London. . . . He had been observed walking with her, and at Lady Ascott's lunch the conversation had suddenly turned on a tall girl with gold hair and an undulating walk. Pointed observations had been made. . . . Lady Lovedale had looked none too well pleased. He didn't wish to be cynical, but he did want to know whether he was going to fall in love? . . . They had now arrived at that point when love-making or an interruption in their intimacy was imperative. He did not regret having offered her the money to go abroad to study, it was well he should have done so, but he should not have said, "But *I'll* go to see you in Paris." She was a clever girl, and knew as well as he how such adventures must end. . . . She was a religious girl, a devout Catholic, and as he had himself been brought up in that religion, he knew how it restrained the sexual passion or fashioned it in the mould of its dogma. But we are animals first, we are religious animals afterwards. Religious defences must yield before the pressure of the more original instinct, unless, indeed, hers was a merely sexual conscience. The lowest forms of Anglicanism are reduced to perceiving conscience nowhere except in sex. The Catholic was more concerned with matters of faith. Not in France, Italy or Spain did Catholicism enter so largely into the private life of the individual as it did in England. The foreign, or to be more exact, the native Catholic had worn the yoke till it fitted loose on his shoulders. His was a more eclectic Christianity; he took what suited him and left the rest. But in England

Romanism had never shaken itself free from the Anglican conscience. The convert never acquired the humanities of Rome, and in addition the lover had to contend against the confessional. But in Evelyn's case he could set against the confessional the delirium of success, the joy of art, the passion of emulation, jealousy and ambition, and last, but far from least, the ache of her own passionate body. Remembering the fear and humility with which he had been used to approach the priest, and the terror of eternal fire in which he had waited for him to pronounce absolution, Owen paused to think how far such belief was from him now. Yet he had once believed—in a way. He wondered at the survival of such a belief in the nineteenth century, and asked himself if confession were not inveterate in man. The artist in his studio, the writer in his study, strive to tell their soul's secret; the peasant throws himself at the feet of the priest, for, like them, he would unburden himself of that terrible weight of inwardness which is man. Is not the most mendacious mistress often taken with the desire of confession . . . the wish to reveal herself? Upon this bed-rock of human nature the confessional has been built. And Owen admired the humanity of Rome. Rome was terribly human. No Church, he reflected, was so human. Her doctrine may seem at times quaint, mediæval, even gross, but when tested by the only test that can be applied, power to reach to human needs, and administer consolation to the greatest number, the most obtuse-minded cannot fail to see that Rome easily distances her rivals. Her dogma and ceremonial are alike conceived in extraordinary sympathy with man's common nature. . . .

Our lives are enveloped in mystery, the scientist concedes that, and the woof of which the stuff of life is woven is shot through with many a thread of unknown origin, untraceable to any earthly shuttle. There is a mystery, and in the elucidation of that mystery man never tires; the Sovereign Pontiff and the humblest crystal gazer are engaged in the same adventure. The mystery is so intense, and lives so intimately in all, that Rome dared to come forward with a complete explanation. And her necessarily perfunctory explanation she drapes in a ritual so magnificent, that even the philosopher ceases to question, and pauses abashed by the grandeur of the symbolism. High Mass in its own home, under the arches of a Gothic cathedral, appealed alike to the loftiest and humblest intelligence. Owen paused to think if there was not something vulgar in the parade of the Mass. A simple prayer breathed by a burdened heart in secret awaked a more immediate and intimate response in him. That was Anglicanism. Perhaps he preferred Anglicanism. The truth was, he was deficient in the religious instinct.

Awaking from his reverie, he raised himself from the mantelpiece against which he was leaning. Never had he thought so brilliantly, and he regretted that no magical stenographer should be there to register his thoughts as they passed. But they were gone. . . . Resuming his position against the mantelpiece, he continued his interrupted train of thoughts.

There would be the priest's interdiction . . . unless, indeed, he could win Evelyn to agnosticism. In his own case he could imagine a sort of religious agnosticism. But is a woman capable of such a serene contemplation

and comprehension of the mystery, which perforce we must admit envelops us, and which often seems charged with murmurs, recollections and warnings of the under world? Does not woman need the grosser aid of dogma to raise her sensual nature out of complete abjection? But all this was very metaphysical. The probability was that Evelyn would lead the life of the ordinary prima donna until she was fifty, that she would then retire to a suburb in receipt of a handsome income, and having nothing to do, she would begin to think again of the state of her soul. The line of her chin deflected; some would call it a weak chin, but he had observed the same in men of genius—her father, for instance. None could be more resolute than he in the pursuance of his ideas. The mother's thin, stubborn mouth must find expression somewhere in her daughter. But where? Evelyn's mouth was thin and it drooped at the ends. . . . But she was only twenty; at five-and-twenty, at thirty, she might be possessed by new ideas, new passions. . . . The moment we look into life and examine the web a little, what a mystery it becomes, how occult the design, and out of what impenetrable darkness the shuttle passes, weaving a strange pattern, harmonious in a way, and yet deducible to none of our laws! This little adventure, the little fact of his becoming Evelyn's lover, was sown with every eventuality. . . . If, instead of his winning her to agnosticism, she should win him to Rome! Then they would have to separate or marry, otherwise they would burn in hell for ever.

But he would never be fool enough to accept such a story as that again. That God should concern himself at all in our affairs was strange enough, that he

should do so seemed little creditable to him, but that he should manage us to the extent of the mere registration of a cohabitation in the parish books was—. Owen flung out his arms in an admirable gesture of despair, and crossed the room. After awhile he returned to the fireplace calmer, and he considered the question anew. By no means did he deny the existence of conscience; his own was particularly exact on certain points. In money matters he believed himself to be absolutely straight. He had never even sold a friend a horse knowing it to be unsound; and he had always avoided—no, not making love to his friends' wives (to whose wives are you to make love if not to your friends'?)—he had avoided making women unhappy. But much more than in morals his conscience found expression in art. That Evelyn should use her voice except for the interpretation of masterpieces would shock him quite as much as an elopement would shock the worthy Fathers of St. Joseph's. He smiled at his thoughts, and remembered that it was through fear of not making a woman happy that he had not married. He hated unhappiness. His wish had always been to see people happy. Was not that why he wished to go away with Evelyn? A particularly foolish woman had once told him that she liked going out hunting because she liked to see people amused. . . . He did not pretend to such altruism as hers, and he remembered how he used to watch for her at the window as she came across the square with her dog. But Evelyn was quite different. He could not have her to luncheon or tea, and send her back to her father. Somehow, it would not seem fair to her. No; he must break with her, or

they must go away together. Which was it to be? Mrs. Hartrick had written three times that week! And there was Lady Lovedale. She had promised to come to tea on Friday. Was he going to renounce the list, or was he going to put all his eggs in one basket? The list promised much agreeable intercourse, but it was wholly lacking in unexpectedness. He had been through it all before, and knew how each story would end. In mutual indifference or in a tiff because he wearied of accompanying her to all racecourses and all theatres. Another would pretend that her husband was jealous, and that she daren't come to see him any more. But Evelyn would be quite different. In her case, he could not see further than driving to Charing Cross and getting into the mail train for Paris. She was worth the list, not a doubt of it. If he were only sure that he loved her, he would not hesitate. He was interested in her, he admired her, but did he love her? A genuine passion alone would make an elopement excusable.

One of his moralities was that a man who did not love his mistress was a beast, and that a man who loved a woman who wasn't, was a fool. Another was that although every man of the world knew a *liasion* would not last for ever, he should not begin one unless it seemed as if it were going to. In other words, you should not be able to see the end before you began. But he had never even kissed Evelyn, and it was impossible even to guess, even approximately, if you were going to like a girl before you had kissed her. There could be no harm in kissing her. Then, if he were sure he loved her, they might go away together. Of course, there were hypocrites who would say that he

had seduced her, that he had ruined her, robbed Mr. Innes of his only daughter. But he was not concerned with conventional, but with real morality. If he did not go away with her, what would happen? He had told her the truth in the park that morning, and he believed every word he had said. . . . If she did not leave her father she would learn to hate him. It was terrible to think of, but it was so, and nothing could change it. He tried to recall his exact words, and easily imagined her father stricken with remorse, and Evelyn looking across the table, hating him in spite of herself. But if he could persuade her to leave him for two years he would engage to bring her back a great singer. And what an interest it would be to watch the development of that voice, surely the most beautiful soprano he had ever heard! She might begin with "Margaret" and "Norma," if she liked, for in singing these popular operas she would acquire the whole of her voice, and also the great reputation which should precede and herald the final stage of her career. "Isolde," "Brunnhilde," "Kundry," Wagner's finest works, had remained unsung—they had been merely howled. Evelyn should be the first to sing them. His eyes glowed with subdued passion as he thought of an afternoon, some three years hence, in the great theatre planned by the master himself, when he should see her rush in as the Witch Kundry. The marvellous evocation of Arabia flashed upon him. . . . Would he ever hear her sing it? . . . Yes, if she would consent to go away with him he would hear her sing it. But would she go away with him? Her love of her father, and her religion, might prevent her. . . . She might not even care for him . . .



She might be thinking of marrying him. Was it possible that she was such a fool? What good would it do her to marry him? She could not go on the stage as Lady Asher. Lady Asher as Kundry! Could anything be more grotesque? How beset life was with difficulties! Without her vocation she was no longer the Evelyn Innes he was in love with. . . . Someone else, a pretty, interesting girl, the daughter of a suburban organist. To marry her now would be to ruin her. But he might marry her five or six years hence, for there was no reason why she should continue singing "Isolde" and "Brunnhilde" till she had no shred of voice left. When she had established a standard she would have achieved her mission, then it would be for others to maintain the standard. In the full blaze of her glory she might become Lady Asher. He would have to end his life somehow, that way as well as another. Five years are a long while—anything might happen. She might leave him for someone else . . . anything—anything—anything might happen. It was impossible to divine the turn human lives would take. The simple fact of his elopement contained a dozen different stories in germ. Each would find opportunities of development; they would struggle for mastery; which would succeed? . . . Keep women you couldn't; he had long ago found out that. Marry them, and they came to hate the way you walked across the room; remain their lover, and they jilted you at the end of six months. He had hardly ever heard of a *liaison* lasting more than a year or eighteen months, and Evelyn would meet all the nicest men in Europe. All Europe would be his rival—really it would be better to give her up. . . .

She was the kind of woman who, if she once let herself go, would play the devil. Turning from the fire he looked into the glass. . . . He admitted to eight-and-thirty, he was forty—a very well-preserved forty. There were times when he did not look more than five-and-thirty. His hair was paler than it used to be; it was growing a little thin on the forehead, otherwise he was the same as when he was five-and-twenty. But he was forty, and a man of forty cannot marry a prima donna of twenty. Five pleasant years they might have together, five delicious years; it were vain to expect more. But he would not get her to go away with him under a promise of marriage; all such deception he held to be as dishonourable as cheating at cards. So in their next interview it would have to be suggested that there could be no question of marriage, at least for the present. At the same time he would have her understand that he intended to shirk no responsibility. But if he were to tire of her! That was another possibility, and a hateful one; he would prefer that she should jilt him. Perhaps it would be better to give her up, and throw his fate in with the list. But he was tired of country houses, with or without a *liaison*, and felt that he could not go through another season's hunting; he had no horses that suited him, and didn't seem to be able to find any. To go abroad with Evelyn, watch over the cultivation of her voice, see her fame rising, that was his mission! The only question to decide was whether he was in love with her. He would not hesitate a moment if he were only sure of that. He thought of the women he knew. Georgina was the first to come up in his mind. He had been to see her, and had come away at a loss to under-

stand what he had ever seen in her. She had struck him as vulgar and middle-class, sly, with a taste for intrigue. He remembered that was how she had struck him when he first saw her. But if anyone had described her as vulgar and middle-class six months ago. Good heavens!

## VII.

THE day grew too fine, as he said, for false notes, so the music lesson was abandoned, and they went to sit in the garden behind the picture gallery, a green sward with high walls covered with creeper, and at one end a great cedar with a seat built about the trunk; a quiet place rife with songs of birds, and unfrequented save by them. They had taken with them Omar's verses, and Evelyn hoped that he would talk to her about them, for the garden of the Persian poet she felt to be separated only by a wicket from theirs. But Owen did not respond to her humour. He was prepossessed to argue about the difficulties of her life, and of the urgent necessity of vanquishing these.

He had noticed, he said, as they sat in the park, that she had a weak face. Her thoughts were far away; he had caught her face, as it were, napping, and had seen through it to the root of her being. The conclusion at which he had arrived was that she was not capable of leading an independent life.

"Am I not right? Isn't it so?"

"You think that because I don't leave father and go abroad,"

“You might go abroad and lead a dependent life; you might stay at home and lead an independent life.”

He asked her what offers of marriage she had had.

One was from the Vicar, a widower, a man of fifty, the other from a young man in a solicitor's office. She did not care for either, and had not entertained their proposals for a second.

“If you marry anyone, it must be a duke. Life is a battle; society will get the better of us unless we get the better of society. Everyone must realise that—every young man, every young woman. We must conquer or be conquered.”

Society, he argued, did not require a chaperon from her; society would, indeed, resent a chaperon if she were to appear with one. Society not only granted her freedom, but demanded that she should exercise it. As a freelance she would be taken notice of, as a respectable, marriageable girl she would be passed over. The cradle and the masterpiece were irreconcilable ideals. He drew an amusing picture of the prima donna's husband, the fellow who waits with a scarf ready to wind it round the throat of his musical instrument; the fellow who is always on the watch lest someone should walk off with his means of subsistence. Evelyn listened because she liked to hear him talk; she knew that he was trying to influence her with argument, but it was he himself who was influencing her, she dreaded his presence, not his argument.

She got up and walked across the sward; and as they returned through the flowery village street, the faint May breeze shed the white chestnut bloom about their feet. It seemed to him better to say nothing;

there are times when silence is more potent than speech. They were walking under the trees of the old Dulwich street, and so charming were the hedge-hidden gardens, and the eighteenth-century houses with white porticoes, that Owen could not but think Dulwich at that moment seemed the natural nativity of the young girl's career. A few moments after they were at Dowlands. She was trembling, and had no strength of will to refuse to ask him in. She would have had the strength if she had not been obliged to give him her hand. She had tried to bid him good-bye without giving her hand, and had not succeeded, and while he held her hand her lips said the words without her knowing it. She spoke unconsciously, and did not know what she had said till she had said it.

And while they waited for tea, Evelyn lay back in a wicker chair thinking. He had said that life without love was a desert, and many times the conversation trembled on the edge of a personal avowal, and now he was playing love music out of "Tristan" on the harpsichord. The gnawing, creeping sensuality of the phrase brought little shudders into her flesh; all life seemed dissolved into a dim tremor and rustling of blood; vague colour floated into her eyes, and there were moments when she could hardly restrain herself from jumping to her feet and begging him to stop. . . . The servant brought in the tea, and she thought she would feel better when the music ceased. But neither did the silence nor the tea help her. He sat opposite her, his eyes fixed upon her, that half-kindly, half-cynical face of his showing through the gold of his moustache. He seemed to know that she could not follow the conversa-

tion and seemed determined to drive the malady that was devouring her to a head. He continued to speak of the motive of the love call, how it is interwoven with the hunting fanfare; when the fanfare dies in the twilight, how it is then heard in the dark loneliness of the garden. She heard him speak of the handkerchief motive, of thirty violins playing three notes in ever precipitated rhythm, until we feel that the world reels behind the woman, that only one thing exists for her—Tristan. A giddiness gathered in Evelyn's brain, and she fell back in her chair, slightly to the left side, and letting her hand slip towards him, said, with a beseeching look,—

“I cannot go on talking, I am too tired.”

It seemed as if she were going to faint, and this made it easy and natural for him to take her hand, to put his arm about her, and then to whisper,—

“Evelyn, dear, what is the matter?”

She opened her eyes; their look was sufficient answer.

“Dearest Evelyn,” he said; and bending over, he kissed her on the cheek.

“This is very foolish of me,” she said, and throwing her arm about his neck, she kissed him on the mouth. “But you are fond of me?” she said impulsively, laying her hand on his shoulder. It was a movement full of affectionate intimacy.

“Yes,” he said, moving her face again towards him. “I love you, I've always loved you.”

“No,” she said, “you didn't, not always; I know when you began to care for me.”

“When?”

“When you returned from Greece, at the moment when you said you wanted me to like you. Is it not true?”

Owen dared not tell her that it was at the moment of kissing her that he had really begun to love her. In that moment he had entered into her atmosphere; it was fragrant as a flower, and it had decided him to use every effort to become her lover.

“No,” she said, “you must not kiss me again.”

She got up from the low wicker chair; he followed her, and they sat close together on two low seats. He put his arm round her and said,—

“I love to kiss you. . . . Why do you turn away your head?”

“Because it is wrong; I shall be miserable to-night.”

“You don’t think it wrong to kiss me?”

“Yes, I do.”

Then turning her face to his, she kissed him.

“Who taught you to kiss like that?”

“No one, I never kissed anyone before—father, of course. You know what I mean.”

“She’ll be an adorable mistress,” he thought, “and in four years the greatest singer in England. I shall get very fond of her. I like her very much as it is, and when she gets over her religious scruples—when I’ve reformed her—she’ll be enchanting. It is lucky she met me; without me she’d have come to nothing.”

She asked him what he was thinking about, and he answered of the happiness he had begun to feel was in store for them.

“What happiness?” she asked; and he answered,—

“The happiness of seeing each other constantly—the

happiness of lovers. Now we must see each other more often."

"How often? Every day?"

He wondered what was the exact colour of her eyes, and he pressed her to answer. At last she said,—

"You cannot come here oftener than you do at present. I'm deceiving father about these lessons. What will you do if he asks you to play to him? What excuse will you give? You daren't attempt the simplest exercise, you haven't got over the difference of the bowing; you'd play false notes all the time."

"Yes," he said; "I've not made much progress, have I?"

"No, you haven't; but that isn't my fault."

"But the days I don't see you seem so long!"

"Do you think they do not seem long to me? I've nothing to think about but you."

"Then, on your weariest days, come and see me. We can always see each other in Berkeley Square. Send me a wire saying you are coming."

"I could not come to see you," she said, still looking at him fixedly; "you know that I could not. . . . Then why do you ask me?"

"Because I want you."

"You know that I'd like to come."

"Then, if you do, you'll come. I don't believe in temptations that we don't yield to."

"I suppose that the temptation that we yield to is the temptation?"

"Of course. But, Evelyn, you are not going to waste your life in Dulwich. Come and see me to-morrow and, if you like, we'll decide."



"On what?"

"You know what I mean, dearest."

"Yes, I think I do," she said, smiling at once sadly and ardently; "but I'm afraid it wouldn't succeed. I'm not the kind of woman to play the part to advantage."

"I'm very fond of you, and I think you're very fond of me."

"You don't think about it—you know I am."

"Then why did you say you would not come and see me?"

"I did not say so. But something tells me that if I did go away with you it would not succeed."

"Why do you think that?"

"I don't know. Something whispers that it wouldn't succeed. All my people were good people—my mother, my grandmother, my aunts. I never had a relative against whom anything could be said, so I don't know why I am what I am. For I'm only half good. It is you who make me bad, Owen; it isn't nice of you." She flung her arms about him, and then recoiled from him in a sudden revulsion of feeling.

"When you go away I shall be miserable; I shall repent of all this . . . I'm horrid." She covered her face in her hands. "I didn't know I was like this."

A moment after she reached out her hand to him, saying,—

"You're not angry with me? I can't help it if I'm like this. I should like to go and see you; it would be so much to me. But I must not. But why mustn't I?"

"I know no reason, except that you don't care for me."

"But you know that isn't so."

"Come, dearest, be reasonable. You're not going to stop here all your life playing the viola da gamba. The hour of departure has come," he said, perceiving her very thought; "be reasonable, come and see me to-morrow. Come to lunch, and I'll arrange. You know that you—"

"Yes, I believe that," she said, in response to a change which had come into her appreciation. "But can I trust myself? Suppose I did go away, and repented and left you. Where should I go? I could not come back here. Father would forgive me, I daresay, but I could not come back here."

"Repented? Those are fairy tales," he said, lifting her gold hair from her ear and kissing it. "A woman does not leave the man who adores her."

"You told me they often did."

"How funny you are. . . . They do sometimes, but not because they repent."

Her head was on his shoulder, and she stood looking at him a long while without speaking.

"Then you do love me, dearest? Tell me so again."

Kissing her gently on the mouth and eyes, he answered,—

"You know very well that I do. Come and see me to-morrow. Say you will, for I must go now."

"Go now!"

"Do you know what time it is? It is past seven."

She followed him to the gate of the little garden. The lamps were lighted far away in the suburbs. Again he asked her to come and see him.

"I cannot to-morrow; to-morrow will be Sunday."

His footsteps echoed through the chill twilight, and

seeing a thin moon afloat like a feather in the sky, she thought of Omar's moon, that used to seek the lovers in their garden, and that one evening sought one of them in vain.

### VIII.

THERE WAS NO other place except the picture gallery where they could see each other alone. But the dignity of Valasquez and the opulence of Rubens distracted their thoughts, and they were ill at ease on a backless seat in front of a masterpiece. Owen regretted the Hobbema; it was less aggressive than the colonnade. A sun-lit clearing in a wood and a water-mill raised no moral question. He turned his eyes from the dancers, but however he resisted them, their frivolous life found its way into the conversation. They were the wise ones, he said. They lived for art and love, and what else was there in life? A few sonatas, a few operas, a few pictures, a few books, and a love story; we had always to come back to that in the end. He spoke with conviction, his only insincerity being the alteration of a plural into a singular. But no, he did not think he had lied; he had spoken what seemed to him the truth at the present moment. Had he used the singular instead of the plural a fortnight ago, he would have lied, but within the last week his feelings for Evelyn had changed. If she had broken with him a week ago, he would have found easy consolation in the list, but now it was not women, but a woman that he desired. A mere sexual curiosity, and the artistic desire to save a beautiful voice from being wasted, had given way to a more personal

emotion in which affection was beginning. Looking at him, thinking over what he had just said, unable to stifle the hope that those women in the picture were the wise ones, she heard life calling her. The art call and the love call, subtly interwoven, were modulated now on the violins, now on the flutes of an invisible orchestra. At the same moment his immeshed senses, like greedy fish, swam hither and thither, perplexed and terrified, finding no way of escape, and he dreaded lest he had lost his balance and fallen into the net he had cast so often. He had begun to see that she was afraid of the sin, and not at all of him. She had never asked him if he would always love her—that she seemed to take for granted—and he had, or fancied he had, begun to feel that he would never cease to love her. He looked into the future far enough to see that it would be she who would tire of him, and that another would appear two or three years hence who would appeal to her sensual imagination just as he did to-day. She would strive to resist it, she would argue with herself, but the enticing illusion would draw her as in a silken net. He was now engaged in the destruction of her moral scruples—in other words, making the way easy for his successor.

They were in the gallery alone, and, taking her hand, he considered in detail the trouble this *liaison* would bring in its train. He no longer doubted that she would go abroad with him sooner or later. He hoped it would be sooner, for he had begun to perceive the absurdity of his visits to Dulwich. The question was whether she was worth an exile in a foreign country. He would have to devote himself to her and to her interests. She would have a chaperon. There would be no use in

their openly living together—that he could not stand. But at that moment the exquisite happiness of seeing her every day, coming into the room where she was reading or singing, and kissing her as he leaned over her chair, affectionately, as a matter of course, deriving his enjoyment from the prescriptive right to do so, and then talking to her about ordinary affairs of life, came upon him suddenly like a vision; and this imagined life was so intense that for one moment it was equivalent to the reality. He saw himself taking her home from the theatre at night in the brougham. In the next instant they were in the train going to Bayreuth. In the next he saw her as Kundry rush on to the stage. He felt that, whatever it cost him, that was the life he must obtain. He felt that he could not live if he did not acquire it, and so intense was the vision that, unable to endure its torment, he got up and proposed they should go into the garden and sit under the cedar.

They were alone in the garden as they were in the gallery, but lovers are averse to open spaces, and Owen felt that their appearance coincided too closely with that of lovers in many popular engravings. He hoped he was not observed, and regretted he had often spoken of the picture gallery to his friends. An unlucky chance might bring one of them down.

It was in this garden, amid the scent and colour of May, that the most beautiful part of their love story was woven. It was in this garden that they talked about love and happiness, and the mystery of the attraction of one person to another, and whilst listening to him, a poignant memory of the afternoon when he had first kissed her often crossed her mind. Little faintnesses

took her in the eyes and heart. Their voices broke, and it seemed that they could not continue to talk any longer of life and art. It was in this garden that they forgot each other. Their thoughts wandered far away, and then, when one called the other's attention, he or she relinquished scenes and sensations and came back, appearing suddenly like someone out of a mist. Each asked the other what he or she had been dreaming. Once he told her his dream. It was of a villa in the middle of a large garden surrounded by chestnut trees and planted with rhododendrons. In this villa there dwelt a great singer whose name was a glory in the world, and to this villa there came very often a tall, thin, ugly man, and, seeing the beautiful singer walking with him, the folk wondered how she could love him.

It was a sort of delicious death, a swooning ecstasy, an absorption of her individuality in his. Just as the spring gradually displaced the winter by a new branch of blossom, and in that corner of the garden by the winsome mauve of a lilac bush, without her knowing it his ideas caught root in her. New thoughts and perceptions were in growth within her, and every day she discovered the new where she had been accustomed to meet the familiar idea. She seemed to be slipping out of herself as out of a soft, white garment, unconsciously, without any effort on her part.

Very often they discussed whether sacrifice of self is not the first of the sins against life. "That is the sin," he said, "that cries loudest to Nature for vengeance. To discover our best gift from Nature, and to cultivate that gift, is the first law of life." If she could not accept this theory of life as valid and justifiable, she had at

least begun to consider it. Another of Owen's ideas that interested her was his theory of beauty. He said that he could not accept the ordinary statement that a woman was beautiful and stupid. Beauty and stupidity could not exist in the same face, stupidity being the ugliest thing on earth; and he contended that two-thirds of human beauty were the illumination of matter by the intelligence, and but one-third proportion and delicacy of line. After some hesitation, he admitted that at first he had been disappointed in her, but now everything about her was an enchantment, and when she was not present, he lived in memories of her. He spoke without emphasis, almost as if he were speaking to himself, and she could not answer for delight.

Her father was vaguely conscious of some change in his daughter, and when one day he heard her singing "Faust," he was perplexed; and when she argued that it was a beautiful and human aspiration, he looked at her as if he had never seen her before. He asked her how she had come to think such a thing, and was perplexed by her embarrassments. She was sorry for her liking for Gounod's melodies. It seemed to alienate them; they seemed to have drifted apart. She saw a silently widening distance, as if two ships were moving away. One day he asked her if she were going to communion next Sunday. She answered that she did not think so, and sat thinking a long while, for she had become suddenly aware that she was not as pious as she used to be. She did not think that Owen's arguments had touched her faith, but she no longer felt the same interest in religion; and in thinking over this change, which seemed so independent of her own will, she grew

pensive and perplexed. Her melancholy was a sort of voluptuous meditation. She was conscious all the while of Owen's presence. It was as if he were standing by her, and she felt that he must be thinking of her.

He had often spoken of going away with her; she had smiled plaintively, never regarding an elopement as possible. But one evening her father had gone to dine with a certain Roman prelate who believed in the advantage to the Catholic Church of a musical reformation. And she had gone to meet Owen, who had driven from London. They had walked two hours in the lanes, and when she got home she ran to her room and undressed hurriedly, thinking how delightful it would be to lie awake in the dark and remember it all. And feeling the cool sheets about her she folded her arms and abandoned herself to every recollection. Her imagination, heightened as by a drug, enabled her to see the white, dusty road and the sickly, yellow moon rising through the branches. Again she was standing by him, her arms were on his neck; again they stood looking into the vague distance, seeing the broken paling in the moonlight. There were his eyes and hands and lips to think about, and when she had exhausted these memories, others sprang upon her. It was in the very centre of her being that she was thinking of the moment when she had spied his horse's head over the hill-top. She had recognised his silhouette against the sky. He had whipped up the horse, he had thrown the reins to the groom, he had sprung from the step. The evening was then lighted by the sunset, and as the sky darkened, their love had seemed to grow brighter. In comparison with this last meeting, all past meetings seemed shadowy



and unreal. She had never loved him before, and if her smile had dwindled when he asked her to come away with him, she had liked to hear him say the dogcart was waiting at the inn. But when they stood by the stile where cattle were breathing softly, and the moon shone over the sheepfold like a shepherd's lantern, her love had grown wilful, and she had liked to say that she would go away with him. She knew not whether she could fulfil her promise, but it had been a joy to give it. They had walked slowly towards Dulwich, the groom had brought round the dogcart; Owen had asked her once more to get in. Oh, to drive away with him through the night! "Owen, it is impossible," she said; "I cannot, at least not now. But I will one day very soon, sooner perhaps than you think."

He had driven away, and, standing on the moon-whitened road, she had watched the white dust whirl about the wheels.

One of the difficulties in the indulgence of these voluptuous meditations was that they necessitated the omission of her evening prayers. She could not kneel by her bedside and pray to God to deliver her from evil, all the while nourishing in her heart the intention of abandoning herself to the thought of Owen the moment she got into bed. Nor did the omission of her evening prayers quite solve the difficulty, for when she could think no more of Owen, the fear of God returned. She dared not go to sleep, and lay terrified, dreading the devil in every corner of the room. Lest she might die in her sleep and be summoned before the judgment seat, she lay awake as long as she could.

When she fell asleep she dreamed of the stage when

the world was won, and when it seemed she had only to stretch her hands to the sky to take the stars. But in the midst of her triumph she perceived that she could no longer sing the music the world required; a new music was drumming in her ears, drowning the old music, a music written in a melancholy mode, and played on invisible harps. Owen told her it was madness to listen, and she strove to close her ears against it. In great trouble of mind she awoke; it was only a dream, and she had not lost her voice. She lay back upon the pillow and tried to recall the music which she had heard on the invisible harps, but already it was forgotten; it faded from her brain like mist from the surface of a mere. But the humour that the dream had created endured after the dream was dead. She felt no longer as she had felt over-night, and lay in a sort of obtuse sensibility of conscience. She got up and dressed, her mind still clouded and sullen, and her prayers were said in a sort of middle state between fervour and indifference. Her father attributed her mood to the old cause; several times he was on the point of speaking, and she held him for the moment by the lappet of his coat and looked affectionately into his face. But something told her that if she were to confide her trouble to anyone, she would lose the power she had acquired over herself. Something told her that all the strength on her side was reposed in the secrecy of the combat. If it were known, she could imagine herself saying,—

“Well, nothing matters now; let us go away, Owen.”

He was coming to see her between eleven and twelve—at the very time he knew her father would be away from home, and this very fact stimulated her

ethical perception. Her manner was in accordance with her mood, and the moment he entered he saw that something had happened, that she was no longer the same Evelyn from whom he had parted a couple of nights before.

“Well, I can see you have changed your mind; so we are not going away together. Evelyn, dear, is it not so? Tell me.”

He was a little ashamed of his hypocrisy, for, as he had driven home in the dogcart, the adventure he was engaged in had appeared to him under every disagreeable aspect. He could not but think that the truth of the story would leak out, and he could hear all the women he knew speaking of Evelyn as a girl he had picked up in the suburbs—an organist’s daughter. He had thought again of the responsibility that going away with this girl imposed upon him, and he had come to the conclusion that it would be wiser to drop the whole thing and get out of it while there was time. That night, as he lay in bed, he saw himself telling people how many operas she knew; and the tales of her successes in Vienna and Naples. . . . But he need not always be with her, she would have a chaperon; and he had fallen asleep thinking which among his friends would undertake the task for him. In the morning he had awakened in the same nervous indecision, and had gone to Dulwich disheartened, provoked at his own folly. It therefore happened that her refusal to go away with him coincided exactly with his humour. So all that was necessary was a mere polite attempt to persuade her that she was sacrificing her career, but without too much insistence on the point; a promise to call again soon;

then a letter saying he was unwell, or was going to Paris or to Riversdale. A month after they could meet at a concert, but he must be careful not to be alone with her, and very soon the incident—after all, he had only kissed her—would be forgotten. But as he sat face to face with her, all his carefully considered plans seemed to drop behind him in ruins, and he doubted if he would be able to deny himself the pleasure of taking her away. That is to say, if he could induce her to go, which no longer seemed very sure. She might be one of those women in whom the sense of sin was so obdurate that they could not but remain virtuous.

But of what was she thinking? he asked himself; and he scanned the yielding face, reading the struggle in a sudden suppressed look or nervous twitching of the lips.

“Dearest Evelin, I love you. Life would be nothing without you.”

“Owen, I am very fond of you, but there would be no use in my going away with you. I should be miserable. I know I am not the kind of woman who would play the part.”

Her words roused new doubts. It would be useless to go away with her if she were to be miserable all the while. He did not want to make anyone miserable; he wanted to make people happy. He indulged in a moment of complacent self-admiration, and then reflected that this adventure would cost a great deal of time and money, and if he were really to get nothing out of it but tears and repentance, he had better take her at her word, bid her good-bye, and write to-morrow saying he was called away to Riversdale on business.

“But you are not cross with me? You will come to see me all the same?”

He wondered if she were tortured with as many different and opposing desires as he was. Perhaps not, and he watched her tender, truthful eyes. In her truthful nature, filled full of passion and conscience, there was no place for any slightest calculation. But he was mistrustful, and asked himself if all this resistance was a blind to induce him to marry her. If he thought that, he would drop her at once. This suspicion was lost sight of in a sudden lighting of her hair, caused by a slight turning of her head. Beyond doubt she was a fresh and delicious thing, and if he did not take her, someone else would, and then he would curse his indecision; and if she had a great voice, he would for ever regret he had not taken her when he could get her. If he did not take her now, the chance was gone for ever. She was the adventure he had dreamed all his life. At last it had come to him, perhaps through the sheer force of his desire, and now, should he refrain from the dream, or should he dream it? He saw the exquisite, sensual life that awaited him and her in Paris. He saw her, pale and pathetic, and thought of her eager eyes and lips.

Evelyn sat crestfallen and repentant, but her melancholy was a pretty, smiling melancholy, and her voice had not quite lost the sparkle and savour of wit. She regretted her sin, admitted her culpability, and he was forced to admit that sorrow and virtue sat becomingly upon her. Her mood was in a measure contagious, and he talked gently and gaily about herself, and the day when the world would listen to her with delight and ap-

probation. But while he talked, he was like a man on the rack. He was dragged from different sides, and the questioner was at his ear.

Hitherto he had never compromised himself in his relations with women. As he had often said of himself, he had inspired no great passion, but a multitude of caprices. But now he had begun to feel that it is one love and not twenty that makes a life memorable, he wished to redeem his life from intrigues, and here was the very chance he was waiting for. But habit had rendered him cowardly, and this seduction frightened him almost as much as marriage had done. To go away with her, he felt, was equivalent to marrying her. His life would never be the same again. The list would be lost to him for ever, no more lists for him; he would be known as the man who lived with—lived with whom? A girl picked up in the suburbs, and who sang rather prettily. If she were a great singer he would not mind, but he could not stand a mediocre singer about whom he would have to talk continual nonsense: conspiracies that were in continual progress against her at Covent Garden, etc. He had heard all that sort of thing before. . . . What should he do? He must make up his mind. It might be as well if he were to ask her to come to his house; then in some three or four months he would be able to see if she were worth the great sacrifice he was going to make for her.

Her hand lay on her knees. He knew that he should not take it, but it lay on her knee so plaintively, that in spite of all his resistance he took it and examined it. It did not strike him as a particularly beautiful hand. It was long and white, and exceedingly flexible. It was

large, and the finger-tips were pointed. The palms curved voluptuously, but the slender fingers closed and opened with a virile movement which suggested active and spontaneous impulses. In taking her hand and caressing it, he knew he was prejudicing his chances of escape, and fearing the hand he held in his might never let him go again, he said,—

“If your destiny should be to play the viola da gamba in Dulwich, and mine to set forth again on my trip round the world.”

In an instant, in a rapid succession of scenes, the horrible winter she had spent in Dulwich passed before her eyes. She saw herself stopping at the corner of a street, and looking at a certain tree and the slope of a certain house, and asking herself if her life would go on for ever, if there would be no change. She saw herself star-gazing, with daffodils for offerings in her hands; and the memory of the hungry hours when she waited for her father to come home to dinner was so vivid, that she thought she felt the same wearying pain and the exhausting yearning behind her eyes, and that feeling as if she wanted to go mad. No; she could not endure it again, and she cried plaintively, falling slightly forward,—

“Owen, don’t make things more difficult than they are. Why is it wrong for me to go away with you? I don’t do any harm to anyone. God is merciful after all.”

“If I were to marry you, you could not go on the stage; you would have to live at Riversdale and look after your children.”

“But I don’t want children. I want to sing.”

"And I want you to sing. No one but husbands have children, except on the stage and in novels."

"It would be much more exciting to run away together, than to be married by the Vicar. It is very wicked to say these things. It is you who make me wicked."

A mist blinded her eyes, and a sickness seemed instilled in her very blood, and in a dubious faintness she was conscious of his lips. He hardly heard the words he uttered, so loud was the clatter of his thoughts, and he seemed to see the trail of his destiny unwinding itself from the distaff in the hands of Fate. He was frightened, and an impulse strove to force him to his feet, and hence, with a rapid goodbye, to the door. But instead, he leaned forth his hands, he sought her, but she shrank away, and turning her face from him, she said,—

"Owen, you must not kiss me."

Again he might choose between sailing the *Medusa* in search of adventure, or crossing the Channel in the mail packet in search of art.

"Will you come away with me?" he said. His heart sank, and he thought of the Rubicon.

"You don't mean this very instant? I could not go away without seeing father."

"Why not? You don't intend to tell him you are going away with me?"

"No; it is not the sort of thing one generally tells one's father, but—I cannot go away with you now—"

"When will you come?"

"Owen, don't press me for an answer. I don't know."

"The way of escape is still open to me," he thought;



but he could not resist the temptation that this girl's face and voice presented to his imagination.

## IX.

SHE sat in the music-room thinking, asking herself what use it would be to meet him in Berkeley Square unless to go away with him to Paris. She sat engrossed in her emotion; it was like looking into water where weeds are carried by a current out of the dim depths into the light of day. In a pensive atmosphere, a quiet daylight, his motives were revealed to her. She was in the humour to look at things sympathetically, and she understood that for him to run away with her entailed as much sacrifice on his part as on hers. It meant a giving up of his friends, pursuits and habits of life. There were sacrifices to be made by him as well as by her, and she smiled a little sadly as she thought of the differences of their several renunciations. She was asked to surrender her peace of mind, he his worldly pleasure. Often the sensation was almost physical; it rose up like a hand and seemed to sweep her heart clear, and at the same moment a voice said—It is not right. Owen had argued with her, but she could not quench the feeling that it was not right, and yet, when he asked her to explain, she could give no other reason except that it was forbidden by the Church.

Each thought that very little was asked from the other. To him her conscience seemed a slight forfeit, and worldly pleasure seemed very little to her. She thought that she would readily forfeit this world for him. . . . But eternity was her forfeit; even that she

might sacrifice if she were sure her conscience would not trouble her in this world. She followed her conscience like a river; it fluttered along full of unexpected eddies and picturesque shallows, and there were pools so deep that she could not see to the bottom.

Suddenly the vision changed. She was no longer in Dulwich with her father. She saw railway trains and steamboats, and then the faint outline of the coast of France. Her foreboding was so clear and distinct that she could not doubt that Owen was the future that awaited her. The presentiment filled her with delight and fear, and both sensations were mingled at the same moment in her heart as she rose from her chair. She stood rigid as a visionary; then, hoping she would not be disturbed, she sank back into her chair and allowed her thoughts their will. She followed the course of the journey to France, and at every moment the sensation grew more exquisite. She heard him say what she wished him to say, and she saw the white villa in its garden planted with rhododendrons and chestnut trees in flower. The mild spring air, faint with perfume, dilated her nostrils, and her eyes drank in the soft colour of the light shadows passing over the delicate grass, and the light shadows moving among the trees. She lay back in her chair, her eyes fixed on a distant corner of the room, and her life went by, clear and surprising as pictures seen in a crystal. When she grew weary of the villa, she saw herself on the stage, and heard her own voice singing as she wished to sing. Nor did she foresee any break in the lulling enchantment of her life of music and love. She knew that Owen did not love her at present, but she never doubted that she could get him to love

her, and once he loved her it seemed to her that he must always love her. What she had heard and read in books concerning the treachery of men, she remembered, but she was not influenced, for it did not seem to her that any such things were to happen to her. She closed her eyes so that she might drink more deeply of the vision, so that she might bring it more clearly before her. Like aspects seen on a misty river, it was as beautiful shadows of things rather than the things themselves. The meditation grew voluptuous, and as she saw him come into her room and take her in his arms, her conscience warned her that she should cease to indulge in these thoughts; but it was impossible to check them, and she dreamed on and on in kisses and tenderesses of speech.

That afternoon she was going to have tea with some friends, and as she paused to pin her hat before the glass, she remembered that if Owen were right, and that there was no future life, the only life that she was sure of would be wasted. Then she would endure the burden of life for naught; she would not have attained its recompense; the calamity would be irreparable; it would be just as if she had not lived at all. Thought succeeded thought in instantaneous succession, contradicting and refuting each other. No, her life would not be wasted, it would be an example to others, it was in renunciation that we rose above the animal and attained spiritual existence. At that moment it seemed to her that she could renounce everything but love. Could she renounce her art? But her art was not a merely personal sacrifice. In the renunciation of her art she was denying a great gift that had been given to her by

Nature, that had come she knew not whence nor how, but clearly for exercise and for the admiration of the world. It therefore could not have been given to her to hide or to waste; she would be held responsible for it. Her voice was one of her responsibilities; not to cultivate her voice would be a sort of suicide. This seemed quite clear to her, and she reflected, and with some personal satisfaction, that she had incurred duties toward herself. Right and wrong, as Owen said, was a question of time and place. What was right here was wrong there, but oneself was the one certain thing, and to remain with her father meant the abandonment of herself. . . . She wanted herself! Ah, she wanted to live, and how well she knew that she was not living, and could never live, in Dulwich. The nuns! Strange were their renunciations! For they yielded the present moment, which Owen and a Persian poet called our one possession. She seemed to see them fading in a pathetic decadence, falling like etiolated flowers, and their holy simplicities seemed merely pathetic.

And in the exaltation of her resolution to live, her soul melted again into Owen's kisses, and she drew herself together, and the spasm was so intense and penetrating that to overcome it she walked across the room stretching her arms. It seemed to her more than impossible that she could endure Dulwich any longer. The life of love and art tore at her heart; always she saw Owen offering her love, fame, wealth; his hands were full of gifts; he seemed to drop them at her feet, and taking her in his arms, his lips closed upon hers, and her life seemed to run down like the last struggling sand in a glass.

Besides this personal desire there was in her brain a strange alienation. Paris rose up before her, and Italy, and they were so vague that she hardly knew whether they were remembrances or dreams, and she was compelled by a force so exterior to herself that she looked round frightened, as if she believed she would find someone at her elbow. She did not seem to be alone, there seemed to be others in the room, presences from which she could not escape; she could not see them, but she felt them about her, and as she sought them with fearing eyes, voices seemed speaking inside her, and it was with extreme terror that she heard the proposal that she was to be one of God's virgins. The hell which opened on the other side of Owen ceased to frighten her. The devils waiting there for her soul grew less substantial, and thoughts and things seemed to converge more and more, to draw together and become one. She was aware of the hallucination in her brain, but could not repress it, nor all sorts of rapid questions and arguments. Suddenly a voice reminded her that if she were going to abandon the life of the soul for the life of the flesh, that she should accept the flesh wholly, and not subvert its intentions. She should become the mother of children. Life was concerned more intimately with children than with her art. But somehow it did not seem the same renunciation, and she stood perplexed before the enigma of her conscience.

She looked round the room, dreading and half believing in some diabolic influence at her elbow, but perceiving nothing, an ungovernable impulse took her, and her steps strayed to the door, in the desire and almost in the intention of going to London. But if she went

there, how would she explain her visit? . . . Owen would understand; but if he were not in, she could not wait until he came in. She paused to consider the look of pleasure that would come upon his face when he came in and found her there. There would be just one look, and they would throw themselves into each other's arms. She was about to rush away, having forgotten all else but him, when she remembered her father. If she were to go now she must leave a letter for him explaining—telling him the story. And who would play the *viola da gamba* at his concerts? and there would be no one to see that he had his meals.

Was she or was she not going away with Owen to Paris on Thursday night? The agonising question continued at every moment to present itself. Whatever she was doing or saying, she was always conscious of it, and as the time drew near, with every hour, it seemed to approach and menace her. She seemed to feel it beating like a neuralgic pain behind her eyes; and though she laughed and talked a great deal, her father noticed that her animation was strained and nervous, and he noticed, too, that in no part of their conversation was she ever entirely with him, and he wondered what were the sights and scenes he faintly discerned in her changing eyes.

On getting up on Wednesday morning, she remembered that the best train from Dulwich was at three o'clock, and she asked herself why she had thought of this train, and that she should have thought of it seemed to her like an omen. Her father sat opposite, looking at her across the table. It was all so clear in her mind that she was ashamed to sit thinking these things, for

thinking as clearly as she was thinking seemed equivalent to accomplishment; and the difference between what she thought and what she said was so repulsive to her that she was on the point of flinging herself at his feet several times.

There were times when the temptation seemed to have left her, when she smiled at her own weakness and folly; and having reproved herself sufficiently, she thought of other things. It seemed to her extraordinary why she should argue and trouble about a thing which she really had no intention of doing. But at that moment her heart told her that this was not so, that she would go to meet Owen in Berkeley Square, and she was again taken with an extraordinary inward trembling.

Our actions obey an unknown law, implicit in ourselves, but which does not conform to our logic. So we very often succeed in proving to ourselves that a certain course is the proper one for us to follow, in preference to another course, but, when it comes for us to act, we do not act as we intended, and we ascribe the discrepancy between what we think and what we do to a deficiency of will power. Man dares not admit that he acts according to his instincts, that his instincts are his destiny.

We make up our mind to change our conduct in certain matters, but we go on acting just the same; and in spite of every reason, Evelyn was still undecided whether she should go to meet Sir Owen. It was quite clear that it was wrong for her to go, and it seemed all settled in her mind; but at the bottom of her heart something over which she had no kind of control told her that in the end nothing could prevent her from

going to meet him. She stopped, amazed and terrified, asking herself why she was going to do a thing which she seemed no longer even to desire.

In the afternoon some girl friends came to see her. She played and sang and talked to them, but they, too, noticed that she was never really with them, and her friends could see that she saw and heard things invisible and inaudible to them. In the middle of some trifling chatter—whether one colour or another was likely to be fashionable in the coming season—she had to put her hand in her pocket for her handkerchief, and happened to meet the key of the square, and it brought back to her in a moment the entire drama of her destiny. Was she going to take the three o'clock train to London, or to remain in Dulwich with her father? She thought that she would not mind whatever happened, if she only knew what would happen. Either lot seemed better to her than the uncertainty. She rattled on, talking with fictitious gaiety about the colour of bonnets and a party at which Julia had sung, not even hearing what she was saying. Wednesday evening passed with an inward vision so intense that all the outer world had receded from her, she was like one alone in a desert, and she ate without tasting, saw without seeing what she looked at, spoke without knowing what she was saying, heard without hearing what was said to her, and moved without knowing where she was going.

On Thursday morning the obsession of her destiny took all colour from her cheek, and her eyes were nervous.

“What is it, my girl?” her father said, taking her hand, and the music he was tying up dropped on the



floor. "Tell me, Evelyn; something, I can see, is the matter."

It was like the breaking of a spring. Something seemed to give way within her, and slipping on her knees, she threw her arms about him.

"I am very unhappy. I wish I were dead."

He strove to raise her from her knees, but the attitude expressed her feelings, and she remained, leaning her face against him. Nor could he coax any information from her. At last she said, raising her tearful eyes,—

"If I were to leave you, father, you would never forgive me? But I am your only daughter, and you would forgive me; whatever happened, we should always love one another?"

"But why should you leave me?"

"But if I loved someone? I don't mean as I love you. I could never love anyone so tenderly; I mean quite differently. Don't make me say more. I am so ashamed of myself."

"You are in love with him?"

"Yes, and he has asked me to go away with him." And as she answered, she wondered at the quickness with which her father had guessed that it was Owen. He was such a clever man; the moment his thoughts were diverted from his music, he understood things as well as the most worldly, and she felt that he would understand her, that she must open her heart to him.

"If I don't go away with him I shall die, or kill myself, or go mad. It is terrible to have to tell you these things, father, I know, but I must. I was ill when he went away to Greece, you remember. It was nothing but love of him."

"Did he not ask you to marry him?"

"No, he will never marry anyone."

"And that made no difference to you?"

"Oh, father, don't be angry, don't think me horrid. You are looking at me as if you never saw me before. I know I ought to have been angry when he asked me to go away with him, but somehow I wasn't. I don't know that I even wanted him to marry me. I want to go away and be a great singer, and he is not more to blame than I am. I can't tell lies. What is the use of telling lies? If I were to tell you anything else, it would be untrue."

"But are you going away with him?"

"I don't know. Not if I can help it;" and at that moment her eyes went to the portrait of her mother.

"You lost your mother very early, and I have neglected you. She ought to be here to protect you."

"No, no, father; she would not understand me as well as you do."

"So you are glad that she is not here?"

Evelyn nodded, and then she said,—

"If he were to go away and I were left here again, I don't know what would become of me. It isn't my fault, father; I can't help it."

"I did not know that you were like this. Your mother—"

"Ah! mother and I are quite different. I am more like you, father. You can't blame me; you have been in love with women—with mother, at least—and ought to understand."

"Evelyn . . . these are subjects that cannot be discussed between us."

The eyes of the mother watched them, and there was something in her cold, distant glance which went to their hearts, but they could not interpret its meaning.

"I either had to go away, father, telling you nothing, or I had to tell you everything."

"I will go to Sir Owen."

"No, father, you mustn't. Promise me you won't. I have trusted you, and you mustn't make me regret my trust. This is my secret." He was frightened by the strange light that appeared in her eyes, and he felt that an appeal to Owen would be like throwing oil on a flame. "You mustn't go to Sir Owen; you have promised you won't. I don't know what would happen if you did."

His daughter's confession had frightened him, and he knew not what answer to make to her. When the depths find voice we stand aghast, knowing neither ourselves nor those whom we have lived with always. He was caught in the very den of his being, and seemed at every moment to be turning over a leaf of his past life.

"If you had only patience, Evelyn—ah! you have heard what I am going to say so often, but I don't blame your incredulity. That was why I did not tell you before."

"What has happened?" she asked eagerly; for she, too, wished for a lull in this stress of emotion.

"Well," he said, "Monsignor Mostyn, the great Roman prelate, who has just arrived from Rome, and is staying with the Jesuits, shares all my views regarding the necessity of a musical reformation. He believes that a revival of Palestrina and Vittoria would be of great use to the Catholic cause in England. He says that he

can secure the special intervention of the Pope, and, what is much more important, he will subscribe largely, and has no doubt that sufficient money can be collected."

Evelyn listened, smiling through her sorrow, like a bird when the rain has ceased for a moment, and she asked questions, anxious to delay the inevitable return to her own unhappy condition. She was interested in the luck that had come to her father, and was sorry that her conduct had clouded or spoilt it. At last a feeling of shame came upon them that at such a time they should be engaged in speaking of such singularly irrelevant topics. She could see that the same thought had come upon him, and she noticed his trim, square figure, and the old blue jacket which she had known so many years, as he walked up and down the room. He was getting very grey lately, and when she returned he might be quite white.

"Oh, father, father," she exclaimed, covering her face with her hands, "how unhappy I am."

"I shall send a telegram to Monsignor saying I can't see him this morning."

"Ah! you have to see him this morning;" and she did not know whether she was glad or sorry. Perhaps she was more frightened than either, for the appointment left her quite free to go to London by the three o'clock train.

"I can't leave you alone."

"Darling, if I had wanted to deceive you, I should have told you nothing; and, however you were to watch me, I could always get away if I chose."

She was right, he could not keep her by force, he could do nothing; shame prevented him from appealing

to her affection for him, for it was in his interest she should stay. After all, Sir Owen will make a great singer of her. The thought had come and gone before he was aware, and to atone for this involuntary thought he spoke to her about her religion.

"I used to be religious," she said, "but I am religious no longer. I can hardly say my prayers now. I said them last night, but this morning I couldn't."

He passed his hand across his eyes, and said,—  
"It seems all like a bad dream."

He felt that he ought to stay with her, and at the same time he felt that she was right; that his intervention would be unavailing, for the struggle resided in herself. But if she should learn from Sir Owen to forget him; if he were to lose her altogether; if she should never return? The thought of such a calamity was the rudest blow of all, and the possibility of her going away for a time, shocking as it was, seemed almost light beside it. He struggled against these thoughts, for he hated and was ashamed of them. They came into his mind unasked, and he hoped that they represented nothing of his real feeling. Suddenly his face changed, he remembered his passion for her mother. He had suffered what Evelyn was suffering now. She had divined it by some instinct; true, they were very much like each other. Nothing would have kept him from Gertrude. But all that was so long ago. Good God! It was not the same thing, and at the very same moment he regretted that it was not a music lesson he was going to, for an appointment with Monsignor introduced a personal interest, and if he were not to stay by her, it would seem that he was indifferent to what became of her.

“No, Evelyn, I sha’n’t go; I will stay here, I will stay by you.”

“But I don’t know that I am going away with Sir Owen.”

“You said just now that you were.”

“Did I say so? Father, you must keep your appointment with Monsignor, and you must say nothing to Owen if you should meet him; you promise me that? It rests with me, father, it is all in the heart.”

He stood looking at her, twisting his beard into a point, and while she wondered whether he would go or stay, she admired the delicacy of his hand.

“Think of the disgrace you will bring upon me, and just at the time, too, when Monsignor is beginning to see that a really great choir in London—”

“Then, father, you do think that my going away will prejudice him against you?”

“I don’t say that. I mean that this time seems less—. Of course you cannot go. It is very shocking that we should be discussing the subject together.”

A sudden fortitude came upon her, and a sudden desire to sacrifice herself to her father.

“Then, father, I shall stay. I will do nothing that will interfere with your work.”

“My dearest child, it is not for me—it is yourself—.”

She threw herself into his arms, begging him to forgive her. She wanted to stay with him. She loved him better than her voice, better than anything in the world. He did not answer, and when she raised her eyes she caught a slight look of doubt upon his face, and wondered what it could mean. At the very moment she had determined to stay with him, and forfeit her love and

her art for his sake, a keen sense of his responsibility towards her was borne in upon him, and the feeling within him crushed like a stone that he could never do anything for her, nor anything else except, perchance, achieve that reformation of Church music upon which his heart was set. He understood in that instant that she was sacrificing all her life to his, and he feared the sacrifice she was making, and anticipated in some measure the remorse he would suffer. But he dared not think that she had better go and achieve her destiny in the only way that was open to her. He urged himself to believe that she was acting rightly, it was impossible for him to hold any other opinion. The thoughts that came upon him he strove to think were merely nervous accidents, and he forced himself to accept the irresponsibility of the sacrifice. He wished not to be selfish, but, however he acted, he always seemed to be acting in his own interest. Since she had promised him not to go away with Sir Owen, he was quite free to keep his appointment with Monsignor, and he gathered up his music, and then he let it fall again, fearing that she would interpret his action to mean that he was glad to get away.

She besought him to go; she said she was tired and wanted to lie down, and all the while he spoke she was tortured with an uncertainty as to whether she was speaking the truth or not; and he had not been gone many minutes when she remembered that she had not told him that Owen had asked her to meet him that very afternoon in Berkeley Square, and that the key of the square lay in her pocket. Like one with outstretched hands striving to feel her way in the dark, she sought to discover in her soul whether she had deliberately sup-

pressed or accidentally omitted the fact of her appointment with Owen. It might be that the conversation had taken a sudden turn, at the moment she was about to tell him, for the thought had crossed her mind that she ought to tell him. Then she seemed to lose count of everything, and was unable to distinguish truth from falsehood.

To increase her difficulties, she remembered that she had betrayed Owen's confidence. She could not quite admit to herself that she had a right to tell her father that it was he. But he had guessed it. . . . It seemed impossible to do right. Perhaps there was no right and no wrong, as Owen said; and a wish rose from the bottom of her heart that it might be so, and then she feared she had been guilty of blasphemy. Perhaps she should warn Owen of her indiscretion, and she thought of herself going to London for this purpose, and smiled as she detected the deception which she was trying to practise on herself.

There was nothing for her to do in the house, and when she had walked an hour in the ornamental park, she strayed into the picture gallery, and stood a long time looking at the Dutch lady who was playing the virginal, and whose life passed peacefully, apparently without any emotion, in a silent house amid rich furniture. But she was soon drawn to the Watteau, where a rich evening hushes about a beautiful carven colonnade, under which the court is seated; where gallants wear deep crimson and azure cloaks, and the ladies striped gowns of dainty refinement; where all the rows are full of amorous intrigue, and vows are being pleaded, and mandolines are playing; where a fountain sings in the garden



and dancers perform their pavane or minuet, the lady holding out her striped skirt, and the gentleman bowing to her with a deference that seems a little mocking. An hour of pensive attitudes and whispered confidences, and over every fan a face wonders if there is truth in love.

"It is strange," Evelyn thought, "how one woman lives in obscurity, and another in admiration and success. That woman playing the virginal is not ugly; if she were dressed like these seated under the colonnade, she would be quite as pretty; but she is not as clever, Owen would say, or she wouldn't be playing the virginal in a village. It is strange how I remember everything he says."

She thought of herself as the lady in the centre, the one that looked like the queen, and to whom a tall young man in a lovely cloak was being introduced, and then imagined herself one of the less important ladies who, for the sake of her beautiful voice, would be surrounded and admired by all men; she would create bitter jealousies and annoy a number of women, which, however, she would endeavour to overcome by giving back to them the several lovers whom she did not want for herself.

The life in this picture would be hers if she took the three o'clock train and went to Berkeley Square. The life in the other picture would be hers if she remained in Dulwich.

Only one more hour remained between her and the moment when she would be getting into the train, and on going out of the gallery her senses all seemed awake at the same moment; she saw and felt and heard with equal distinctness, and she seemed to be walking auto-

matically, to be moving forward as if on wheels. She met a friend on her way home, but it was like talking to one across a river or gulf; she wondered what she had said, and hardly heard, on account of the tumult within her, what was being said to her. When she got home, she noticed that she did not take off her hat; and she ate her lunch without tasting it. Her thoughts were loud as the clock which ticked out the last minutes she was to remain at home, and trying not to hear them, she turned to the *Monna Lisa*, wondering what Owen meant when he had said that the hesitating smile in the picture was like her smile. Her thoughts ran on ticking in her brain like the clock in the corner of a room, and though she would have given anything to stop thinking, she could not.

Every moment the agony of anxiety and nervousness increased, and it was almost a relief when the clock pointed to the time when she would have to go to the station. She looked round the room, a great despair mounted into her eyes, and she walked quickly out of the house. As she went down the street she tried to think that she was going to Owen to tell him she had told her father that she was resolved to give him up. It seemed no longer difficult to do this, for, on looking into her mind, she could discover neither desire nor love, nor any wish to see him. She was only conscious of a nervous agitation which she could not control, and through this waking nightmare she walked steadily, thinking with extraordinary clearness.

In the railway carriage the passengers noticed her pallor, and they wondered what her trouble was, and at Victoria, the omnibus conductor just saved her from

being run over. The omnibus jogged on, stopping now and then for people to get in and out, and Evelyn wondered at the extraordinary mechanism of life, and she took note of everyone's peculiarities, wondering what were their business and desires, and wondering also at the conductor's voice crying out the different parts of the town the omnibus would pass through.

"This is Berkeley Street, miss, if you are getting out here."

She waited a few minutes at the corner, and then wandered down the street, asking herself if it was yet too late to turn back.

The sun glanced through the foliage, and glittered on the cockades of the coachmen and on the shining hides of the horses. It was the height of the season, and the young beauties of the year, and the fashionable beauties of the last decade, lay back, sunning themselves under the shade of their parasols. The carriages came round the square close to the curb, under the waving branches, and, waiting for an opportunity to cross, Evelyn's eyes followed an unusually beautiful carriage, drawn by a pair of chestnut horses. She did not see the lady's face, but she wore a yellow dress, and the irises in her bonnet nodded over the hood of the carriage. This lady, graceful and idle, seemed to mean something, but what? Evelyn thought of the picture of the colonnade in the gallery.

The men to whom the stately servants opened the doors wore long frock coats pinched at the waist, and they swung their canes and carried their thick, yellow gloves in their hands. They were all like Owen. They all lived as he lived, for pleasure; they were all here for

the season, for balls and dinner-parties, for love-making and the opera.

"They are the people," Evelyn thought, "who will pay thousands to hear me sing. They are the people who will invite me to their houses. If my voice is cultivated, if I ever go abroad."

She ran across the street and walked under the branches until she came to a gate. But why not go straight to the house? She did not know. . . . She was at the gate, and the square looked green and cool. The gate swung to and closed with a snap; but she had the key and could leave when she liked, and worn out with various fears she walked aimlessly about the grass plots. There was no one in the square, so if he were watching for her he could not fail to see her. Once more a puerile hope crossed her mind fitfully, that perhaps it would be as well if he failed to see her. But no, since she had gone so far she was determined to go on to the end, and before this determination, her spirits revived, and she waited for him to come to her. But for shyness she did not dare to look round, and the minutes she walked under the shady trees were very delightful, for she was penetrated with an intimate conviction that she would not be disappointed. And one of the moments of her life that fixed itself most vividly on her mind was when she saw Owen coming towards her through the trees. He was so tall and thin, and walked so gracefully; there was something in his walk that delighted her; it seemed to her that it was like the long, soft stride of a cat.

"I am glad you have come," he said.

But she could not answer. A moment afterwards he

said, and she noticed that his voice trembled, "You are coming in to tea?"

Again she did not answer, and thinking it safer to take things for granted, he walked towards the gate. He was at the point of saying, "That is my house," but he checked himself, thinking that silence was safer than speech. He could not get the gate open, and while he wrenched at the lock, he dreaded that delay might give her time to change her mind. But Evelyn was now quite determined. Her brain seemed to effervesce and her blood to bubble with joy, a triumphant happiness filled her, for no doubt remained that she was going to Paris to-night.

"Let us have tea as soon as possible, and tell Stanley to bring the brougham round at once."

"Why did you order the brougham?"

"Are you not—? I thought—"

The brilliancy of her eyes answered him, and he took her hands.

"Then you are coming with me to Paris?"

"Yes, if you like, Owen, anywhere. . . . But let me kiss you."

And she stood in a beautiful, amorous attitude, her arm thrown about his neck, her eyes aflame.

"The brougham will be round in half an hour. There is a train at six to Dover. It gets there at nine. So we shall have time to dine at the Lord Warden, and get on board the boat before the mail arrives."

"But I have no clothes."

"The night is fine; we shall have a lovely crossing; you will only want a shawl and a rug. . . . But what are you thinking of? You don't regret?"

His eyes were tenderer than hers. She perceived in their grey lights a tenderness, an affection which seemed in contradiction to his nature as she had hitherto understood it. Even the thought flashed dimly in the background of her mind that his love was truer than hers; his cynicism, which had often frightened her, seemed to have vanished; indeed, there was something different in him from the man she had hitherto known—a difference which was rendered evident by the accent with which he said,—

“Dearest Evelyn, this is the happiest moment of my life. I have spent two terrible days wondering if you would come.”

“Did you, dear? Did you think of me? Are you fond of me?”

He pressed her hand, and with one look answered her question, and she saw the streets flash past her—for they were in the brougham driving to Charing Cross. There was still the danger of meeting Mr. Innes at the station; but the danger was slight. She knew of no business that would take him to Charing Cross, and they were thankful the train did not start from Victoria.

Owen called to his coachman to hasten. They had wasted, he said, too much time over the tea-table, and might miss the train. But they did not miss it, and through the heat of the long, summer afternoon the slow train jogged peacefully through the beautiful undulations of the southern counties. The sky was quiet gold and turquoise blue, and, far away were ruby-tinted clouds. A peaceful light floated over the hillsides and dozed in the hollows, and the happiness of the world seemed

eternal. Deep, cool shadows filled the copses, and the green corn was foot-high in the fields, and every gate and hedgerow wore a picturesque aspect. Evelyn and Owen sat opposite each other, talking in whispers, for they were not alone; they had not been in time to secure a private carriage. The delight that filled their hearts was tender as the light in the valleys and the hillsides. But Evelyn's feelings were the more boisterous, for she was entering into life, whereas Owen thought he was at last within reach of the ideal he had sought from the beginning of his life. This feeling, which was very present in his mind, appeared somehow through his eyes and in his manner, and even through the tumult of her emotions she was vaguely aware that he was even nicer than she had thought. She had never loved him so much as now; and again the thought passed that she had not known him before, and far down in her happiness she wondered which was the true man.

## X.

FROM Dover they telegraphed to Mr. Innes—"Your daughter is safe. She has gone abroad to study singing;" and at midnight they were on board the boat. The night was strangely calm and blue; a little mist was about, and they stood watching the circle of light which the vessel shed upon the water, moving ever onwards, with darkness before and after.

"Dearest, what are you thinking of?"

"Of father. He has received our message by now. Poor dad, he won't sleep to-night. To-morrow they will

all have the news, and on Sunday in church they will 'be talking about it.'"

"But your voice would have been wasted. Your father would have reproached himself; he would think he had sacrificed you to his music."

"Which wouldn't be true."

"True or false, he'd think it. Besides, it would be true in a measure."

Evelyn told Owen of her interview with her father that morning and he said,—

"You acted nobly."

"Nobly? Owen!"

"There was nobility in your conduct."

"He'll be so lonely, so lonely. And," she exclaimed, clasping her hands, "who will play the viola da gamba?"

"When I bring you back a great singer . . . there'll be substantial consolation in that."

"But he won't close his eyes to-night, and he'll miss me at breakfast and at dinner—his poor dinner all by himself."

"But you don't want to go back to him? You love me as much as your father?"

They pressed each other's hands, and, striving to see through the blue hollow of the night, they thought of the adventure of the voyage they had undertaken. Spectral ships loomed up and vanished in the spectral stillness; and only within the little circle of light could they perceive the waves over which they floated. The moon drifted, and a few stars showed through the white wrack. Whither were their lives striving? She had thought that her life in Dulwich must endure for ever, but it had passed from her like a dream; it had snapped



suddenly, and she floated on another voyage, and still the same mystery encircled her as before. She knew that Owen loved her. This was the little circle of life in which she lived, and beyond it she might imagine any story she pleased.

Her thoughts reverted to the Eastern dreamer, and she realised that she was living through the tragedy which he had written about, a thousand years ago in his rose-garden. She might imagine what she pleased—that she was going to become a great singer, that artistic success was the harbour whither she steered, but in truth she did not know. She could not believe such an end to be her destiny. Then what was her destiny? All she had ever known was behind her, had floated into the darkness as easily as those spectral ships; her religion, her father, her home, all had vanished, and all she knew was that she was sailing through the darkness without them. Seen for a moment in the light of the high moon, and then in shrouded blue night, a great ship came and went, and Evelyn clung to the arm of her lover. He folded the rough shawl he had bought at Charing Cross about her shoulders. The lights of Calais harbour grew larger, the foghorn snorted, the vessel veered, and there was preparation on board; the crowd thickened, and as the night grew fainter they saw between the dawn and the silvery moon the long low sand-hills of the French coast. The vessel veered and entered the harbour, and as she churned alongside the windy piers, the mystery with which a moonlit sea had filled their hearts passed, and they were taken in an access of happiness; and they cried to each other for sheer joy as they struggled up the gangway.

They were in France! their life of love was before them! He could hardly take his eyes off the delicious girl; and soon two or three waiters attended at her first meal, her first acquaintance with French food and wine! Owen was known on the line, and the obsequiousness shown to him flattered her, and it was thrilling to read his name on the window of their carriage. Her foot was on the footboard, and seeing the empty carriage the thought struck her, "We shall be alone; he'll be able to kiss me." And, her heart beating with fear and delight, she got in and sat speechless in a corner.

As the train moved out of the station he took her hand, and said that he hoped they would be very happy together. She looked at him, and in her eyes there was a little questioning, almost cynical look, which perplexed him. The part he had to play was a difficult one, and on board the boat, in the pauses of their conversation, he had felt that his future influence over Evelyn depended upon his conduct during the forthcoming week. This foresight had its origin in his temperament. It was his temperament to suggest and to lead, and as he talked to her of Madame Savelli, the great singing mistress, and Lady Duckle, a lady whom he hoped to induce to come to Paris to chaperon her, he saw the hotel sitting-room at the moment when the waiter, having brought in the coffee, and delayed his departure as long as he possibly could, would finally close the door. Nervousness dilated her eyes, and his thoughts were often far from his words. He often had to catch his breath, and he quailed before the dread interrogation which often looked out of her eyes. They had passed Boulogne, and through the dawn, vague as an opal, appeared a low range of hills, and as

these receded, the landscape flattened out into a bleak, morose plain.

What lives were lived yonder in that low grange, crouching under the five melancholy poplars? An hour later father and son would go forth in that treacherous quaking boat, lying amid the sedge, and cast their net into one of those black pools. But these pictures of primæval simplicities which the landscape evoked were not in accord with a journey toward love and pleasure. Evelyn and Owen did not dare to contrast their lives with those of the Picardy peasants, and that they should see not roses and sunshine, but a broken and abandoned boat amid the sedge, and mournful hills faintly outlined against the heavy, lowering sky seemed to them significant. They watched the filmy, diffused, opal light of the dawn, and they were filled with nervous expectation. The man who appeared at the end of the plain in his primitive guise of a shepherd driving his flock towards the hard thin grass of the uplands seemed menacing and hostile. His tall felt had seemed like a helmet in the dusk, his crook like a lance, and Owen understood that the dawn was the end of the truce, that the battle with Nature was about to begin again. At that moment she was thinking that if she had done wrong in leaving home, the sin was worth all the scruples she might endure, and she rejoiced that she endured none. He folded her in his rug. The train seemed to stop, and the names of the stations sounded dim in her ears. Her perceptions rose and sank, and, as they sank, the villa engarlanded, of which Owen had spoken, seemed there. Its gates, though unbarred, were impassable. She thought

she was shaking them, but when she opened her eyes it was Owen telling her that they had passed the fortifications, that they were in Paris.

He had brought with him only his dressing-bag, so they were not detained at the Customs. His valet was following with the rest of his luggage, and as soon as she had had a few hours' sleep, he would take her to different shops. She clung on to his arm. Paris seemed very cold and cheerless, and she did not like the tall, haggard houses, nor the slattern waiter arranging chairs in front of an early *café*, nor the humble servant clattering down the pavement in wooden shoes. She saw these things with tired eyes, and she was dimly aware of a decrepit carriage drawn by two decrepit horses, and then of a great hotel built about a courtyard. She heard Owen arguing about rooms, but it seemed to her that a room where there was a bed was all that she desired.

But the blank hotel bedroom, so formal and cheerless, frightened her, and it seemed to her that she could not undress and climb into that high bed, and she had no clothes—not even a nightgown. The chambermaid brought her a cup of chocolate, and when she had drunk it she fell asleep, seeing the wood fire burning, and thinking how tired she was.

It was the chambermaid knocking. It was time for her to get up, and Owen had sent her a brush and comb. She could only wash her face with the corner of a damp towel. Her stockings were full of dust; her chemise was like a rag—all, she reflected, the discomforts of an elopement. As she brushed out her hair with Owen's brush, she wondered what he could see to like

in her. She admired his discretion in not coming to her room. But really, this hotel seemed as unlikely a place for love-making as the gloomy plain of Picardy.

She was pinning on her hat when he knocked. He told her that he had been promised some nice rooms on the second floor later in the day, and they went to breakfast at Voisin's. The rest of the day was spent getting in and out of cabs.

They took the shops as they came. The first was a boot and shoe-maker, and in a few moments between four and five hundred francs had been spent. This seemed to Evelyn an unheard-of extravagance. Tea-gowns at five hundred and six hundred francs apiece were a joy to behold and a delicacy to touch. The discovery that every petticoat cost fifty francs seriously alarmed her. They visited the bonnet-shop later in the afternoon. By that time she had grown hardened, and it seemed almost natural to pay two hundred francs for a hat. Two of her dresses were bought ready made. A saleswoman held out the skirt of a flowered silk, which she was to wear that night at the opera; another stood by, waiting for her and Owen to approve of the stockings she held in her hands. Some were open-work and embroidered, and the cheapest were fifteen francs a pair. It had to be decided whether these should be upheld by suspenders or by garters. Owen's taste was for garters, and the choice of a pair filled them with a pleasurable embarrassment. In the next shop—it was a glove shop—as she was about to consult him regarding the number of buttons, she remembered, in a sudden moment of painful realisation, the end for which they had met. She turned pale, and the words caught in her throat. For-

tunately, his eyes were turned from her, and he perceived nothing of the nervous agitation which consumed her; but on leaving the shop, a little way down the street, when she had recovered herself sufficiently to observe him, she perceived that he was suffering from the same agitation. He seemed unable to fix his attention upon the present moment. He seemed to have wandered far afield, and when with an effort he returned from the ever nearing future, he seemed like a man coming out of another atmosphere—out of a mist!

At six they were back at their hotel, surveying the sitting-rooms, already littered with cardboard boxes. But he hurried her off to the Rue de la Paix, saying that she must have some jewels. Trays of diamonds, rubies, emeralds and pearls were presented to her for choice.

“You’re not looking,” he said, feigning surprise. “You take no interest in jewels; aren’t you well?”

“Yes, dearest; but I’m bewildered.”

When they returned to the hotel, the gown she was to wear that night at the opera had arrived.

“It must have cost twenty pounds, and I usen’t to spend much more than that in a whole year on my clothes.”

Neither cared to go to the opera; but half-past ten seemed to him quite a proper time for them to return home, and for this makeshift propriety he was so bored with “Lohengrin” that he never saw it afterwards with the old pleasure; and Evelyn’s glances told of the wasted hours. While Elsa sang her dream, he realised the depth of his folly. If something were to happen? If they were to find Mr. Innes waiting at the door of the hotel? If he were robbed of her, it would serve him right. The aria in the second act was beautifully sung,

and it helped them to forget; but with the rather rough chorus of men in the second half of the second act, their nervous boredom began again, and Evelyn's face was explicit.

"You're tired, Evelyn; you're too tired to listen."

"Yes, I'm tired, let's go; give me my cloak."

"I don't care much for the nuptial music," he remarked accidentally; and then, feeling obliged to take advantage of the slip of the tongue, he said, "Lohengrin and Elsa are in the bridal chamber in the next act."

He felt her hand tremble on his arm.

"In two years hence you'll be singing here. . . . But you don't answer."

"Owen, dear, I'm thinking of you now."

Her answer was a delicious flattery, and he hurried her to the carriage. The moment his arm was about her she leaned over him, and when their lips parted he uttered a little cry. But in the middle of the sitting-room she stopped and faced him, barring the way. He took her cloak from her shoulders.

"Owen, dear, if anything should happen."

But it was not till the third night that they entered into the full possession of their delight. Every night after seemed more exquisite than the last, like sunset skies, as beautiful and as unrememberable. She could recall only the moment when from the threshold he looked back, nodded a good-night, and then told her he would call her when it was time to get up. Then in a happy weariness she closed her eyes; and when they opened she closed them quickly, and curled herself into dreams and thoughts of Owen.

They were going to the races, and he would come

and tell her when it was time to get up. She hoped this would not be till she had dreamed to the end of her dream. But her eyes opened, and she saw him in his dressing gown with blue facings standing in the middle of the room watching her. His little smile was in his eyes; they seemed to say, So there you are; I haven't lost you.

"You're the loveliest thing," he said, "in God's earth."

"Dearest Owen, I'm very fond of you;" and there was a plaintive and amorous cry in her voice which found echo in the movement with which she threw herself into her lover's arms, and laid her head upon his shoulder.

"I've never seen such a hand, it is like a spray of fern; and those eyes—look at me, Eve."

"Why do you call me Eve? No one ever called me Eve before."

"Sometimes they are as green as sea water, at other times they are grey or nearly grey, most often they are hazel green. And your feet are like hands, and your ankle—see, I can span it between forefinger and thumb. . . . Your hair is faint, like flowers. Your throat is too thick, you have the real singer's throat; thousands of pounds lie hidden in that whiteness, which is mine—the whiteness, not the gold."

"How you know how to praise, Owen!"

"I love that sweet indecision of chin."

"A retreating chin means want of character."

"You have not what I call a retreating chin, the line merely deflects. Nothing more unlovable than a firm chin. It means a hard, unimaginative nature. Eve, you're adorable. Where should I find a sweetheart equal to you?"



“That isn’t the way I want you to love me.”

“Isn’t it? Are you sure of that?”

“I don’t know—perhaps not. But why do you make me say these things?”

She held his face between her hands, and moved aside his moustache with her lips. . . . Suddenly freeing herself from his embraces, she said, “I don’t want to kiss you any more. Let’s talk.”

“Dearest, do you know what time it is? You must get up and dress yourself. It is past nine o’clock. We are going to the races. I’ll send you the chambermaid. You promise me to get up?”

It was these little authoritative airs that enchanted her remembrance of him; and while the chambermaid poured out her bath she thought of the gown she was going to wear. She knew that she had some pink silk stockings to match it, but it took her a long while to find them. She opened all the wrong boxes. “It’s extraordinary,” she thought, “how long it takes one to dress sometimes; all one’s things get wrong.” And when hooking the skirt she suddenly remembered she had no parasol suitable to the gown. It was Sunday; it would be impossible to buy one. There was nothing for it but to send for Owen. If there was anything wrong with her gown he would give her no peace. He wished her to wear a flower-embroidered dress, but her fancy was set on a pale yellow muslin, and it amused her to get cross with him and to send him out of the room; but when the door closed she was moved to run after him. The grave question as to what she would wear dispelled other thoughts. She must be serious; and to please him she decided she would wear the gown he liked, and as

she fixed the hat that went with it she admired the contrast of its purple with her rich hair. Owen was always right. She had never thought that she could look so well, and it was a happy moment when he took her by both hands and said,—

“Dearest, you are delicious—quite delicious. You’ll be the prettiest woman at Longchamps to-day.”

She asked for tea, but he said they were in France, and must conform to French taste. When Marie Antoinette was informed that the people wanted bread, etc. Evelyn thought Marie Antoinette must have been a cruel woman. But she liked chocolate and the brioche, and henceforth they were brought to her bedside, and in a Sèvres service, a present from Owen.

When they had finished the little meal he rang for writing material, and said,—

“Now, my dear Evelyn, you must write to your father.”

“*Must* I? What shall I say? Oh, Owen, I cannot write. If I did, father would come over here, and then—”

“I’ll tell you what to say. I’ll dictate the letter you ought to write. You need not give him any address, but you must let him know you’re well, and why you intend to remain abroad. It is by relieving his mind on these subjects that you’ll save yourself from the vexation of his hunting you up here. . . . Come, now,” he said, noticing the agonised and bewildered look on Evelyn’s face, “this is the only disagreeable hour in the day—you must put up with it. Here is the pen. Now, write,—

“MY DEAR FATHER,—I should be happy in Paris,

very happy, if it were not for the knowledge of the grief that my flight must have occasioned you. Of course I have acted very wrongly, very wickedly—’”

“But,” said Evelyn, “you told me I was acting rightly, that to do otherwise would be madness.”

“Yes, and I only told you the truth. But in writing to your father you must adopt the conventional tone. There’s no use in trying to persuade your father you did right. . . . I don’t know, though. Scratch out ‘I have acted wrongly and very wickedly,’ and write,—

“‘I will not ask you to think that I have acted otherwise than wrongly, for, of course, as a father you can hold no other opinion, but being also a clever man, an artist, you will perhaps be inclined to admit that my wrong-doing is not so irreparable a wrong-doing as it might have been in other and easily imagined circumstances.’ Full stop.

“You’ve got that—‘so irreparable a wrong-doing as it might have been in other and easily imagined circumstances?’”

“Yes.”

“‘Father dear, you know that if I had remained in Dulwich my voice would have been wasted, not through my fault or yours, but through the fault of circumstances.’

“You have got circumstances a few lines higher up, so put ‘through the fault of fate.’”

“Father will never believe that I wrote this letter.”

“That doesn’t matter—the truth is the truth from whoever it comes.”

“We should have gone on deceiving ourselves, or trying to deceive ourselves, hoping as soon as the concerts paid that I should go abroad with a proper chaperon. You know, father dear, how we used to talk, both knowing well that no such thing could be. The years would have slipped by, and at five-and-thirty, when it would have been too late, I should have found myself exactly where I was when mother died. You would have reproached yourself, you would have suffered remorse, we should have both been miserable; whereas now I hope that we shall both be happy. You will bring about a revival of Palestrina, and I shall sing opera. Be reasonable, father, and remember that it had to be. Write to me if you can; to hear from you will make me very happy. But do not try to seek me out and endeavour to induce me to return home. Any meeting between us now would merely mean intolerable suffering to both of us, and it would serve no purpose whatever. A little later, when I have succeeded, when I am a great singer, I will come and see you, that is to say if you will see me. Meanwhile, for a year or two we had better not meet, but I’ll write constantly, and shall look forward to your letters. Again, my dear father, I beseech you to be reasonable; everything will come right in the end. I will not conceal from you the fact that Sir Owen Asher advised me to this step. He is very fond of me, and is determined to help me in every way. When he brings me back to England a great singer, he hopes you will try to look on his fault with as much

leniency as may be. He asks me to warn you against speaking of him in connection with me, for any accusation brought against him will injure me. He intends to provide me with a proper chaperon. I need not mention her name; suffice it to say that she is a very grand lady, so appearances will be preserved. No one need know anything for certain if you do not tell them. If you will promise to do this, I will send the name of the lady with whom I am going to live. You can say that I am living with her; her name will be a sufficient cloak—everyone will be satisfied. Interference can be productive of no good, remember that; let things take their natural course, and they will come right in the end. If you decide to do as I ask you, write at once to me, and address your letter to 31 Rue Faubourg St. Honoré, care of Monsieur Blanco. Always, dear father, Your affectionate daughter,  
EVELYN INNES.’”

“How clever you are,” she said, looking up. “You have written just the kind of letter that will influence father. I have lived with father all my life, and yet I couldn’t have known how to write that letter. How did you think of it?”

“I’ve put the case truthfully, haven’t I? Now, do you copy out that letter and address it; meanwhile I’ll go round to Voisin’s and order breakfast. Try to have it finished by the time I get back. We’ll post it on our way.”

She promised that she would do so, but instead sat a long while with the letter in her hands. It was so unlike herself that she could not bring herself to send it. It would not satisfy her father, he would sooner receive

something from her own familiar heart, and, obeying a sudden impulse, she wrote,—

“MY DARLING,—What must you think of me, I wonder! that I am an ungrateful girl? I hope not. I don't think you would be so unjust as to think such things of me. I have been very wicked, but I have always loved you, father, and never more than now; and had anything in the world been able to stop me, it would have been my love of you. But, father dear, it was just as I told you; I was determined to resist the temptation if I could, but when the time came I could not. I did my best, indeed I did. I went through agony after agony after you left, and in the end I had to go whether I desired it or not. I could not have stopped in Dulwich any longer; if I had I should have died, and then you would have lost me altogether. You would not have liked to see me pine away, grow white, and lie coughing on the sofa like poor mother. No, you would not. It would have killed you. You remember how ill I was last Easter when he was away in the Mediterranean, darling. We've always been pals, we've always told each other everything, we never had any secrets, and never shall. I should have died if I hadn't gone away. Now I've told you everything— isn't that so?— and when I come back a great success, you'll come and hear me sing. My success would mean very little if you were not there. I would sooner see your dear, darling face in a box than any crowned head in Europe. If I were only sure that you would forgive me. Everything else will turn out right. Owen will be good to me, I shall get on; I have little fear on that score. If I could

only know that you were not too lonely, that you were not grieving too much. I shall write to Margaret and beg her to look after you. But she is very careless, and the grocer often puts down things in his book that we never had. A couple of years, and then we shall see each other again. Do you think, darling, you can live all that time without me? I must try to live that time without you. It will be hard to do so, I shall miss you dreadfully, so if you could manage to write to me, not too cross a letter, it would make a great deal of difference. Of course, you are thinking of the disgrace I have brought on you. There need be none. Owen is going to provide me with a chaperon—a lady, he says, in the best society. I will send you her name next week, as soon as Owen hears from her. He may hear to-morrow, and if you say that I'm living with her, no one will know anything. It is deceitful, I know; I told Owen so, but he says that we are not obliged to take the whole world into our confidence. I don't like it, but I suppose if one does the things one must put up with the consequences. Now, I must say good-bye. I've expressed myself badly, but you'll know what I mean—that I love you very dearly, that I hope you'll forgive me, and be glad to see me when I come back, that I shall always be,—Your affectionate daughter,

EVELYN."

She put the letter into an envelope, and was addressing it when Owen came into the room.

"Have you copied the letter, dear?"

She looked at him inquiringly, and he wondered at her embarrassment.

"No," she said, "I have written quite a different letter. Yours was very clever, of course, but it was not like me. I've written a stupid little letter, but one which will please father better."

"I daresay you're right. If your father suspected the letter was dictated by me he would resent it."

"That's just what I thought."

"Let me see the letter you have written."

"No; don't look at it. I'd rather you didn't."

"Why, dearest? Because there's something about me in it?"

"No, indeed. I would not write anything about you that I wouldn't show you. No; what I don't want you to see is about myself."

"About yourself! Well, as you like, don't show me anything you don't want to."

"But I don't like to have secrets from you, Owen; I hate secrets."

"One of these days you'll tell me what you've written. I'm quite satisfied." He raised her face and kissed her tenderly, and she felt that she loved him better for his well-assumed indifference. Then they went downstairs, and she admired her dress in the long glasses on the landings. She listened to his French as he asked for a stamp. The courtyard was full of sunlight and carriages. The pages pushed open the glass doors for them to pass, and, tingling with health and all the happiness and enchantment of love, she walked by his side under the arcade—glad when, in walking, they came against each other—swinging her parasol pensively, wondering what happy word to say, a little perplexed that she should have a secret from him, and all the



while healthily hungry. Suddenly she recognised the street as the one where they had dined on Friday night. He pushed open a white-painted door, and it seemed to her that all the white-aproned waiters advanced to meet her; and the one who drew the table forward that she might pass seemed to fully appreciate the honour of serving them. A number of *hors d'œuvres* were placed before her, but she only ate bread and butter and a radish, until Owen insisted on her trying the *filets d'anchois*—the very ones she was originally most averse from. The sole was cooked very elaborately in a rich brown sauce. The tiny chicken which followed it was first shown to her in a tin saucepan; then the waiter took it away and carved it at a side table. She enjoyed the melon which, for her sake, ended instead of beginning the meal, as Owen said it should.

An Englishman, a friend of Owen's, sat at the next table, and she could see he regretted that Owen had not introduced him. Most of his conversation seemed designed for that end, and when they got up to go, his eyes surely said, "Well, I wish that he had introduced us; I think we should have got on together." And the eyes of the young man who sat at the opposite table said, as plain as any words, "I'd have given anything to have been introduced! Shall we ever meet again?"

So her exit was very thrilling; and no sooner were they on the pavement than another surprise was in store for her.

A smart coachman touched his hat, and Owen stepped back for her to get into the victoria.

"But this is not our carriage?"

"You did not think we were going to the Long-

champs in a *fiacre*, did you? This is your carriage—I bought these horses yesterday for you.”

“You bought this carriage and these horses for me, Owen?”

“Yes, dear, I did; don’t let’s waste time. *Aux courses!*”

“Owen, dear, I cannot accept such a present. I appreciate your kindness, but you will not ask me to accept this carriage and horses.”

“Why not?”

Evelyn thought for some time before answering.

“It would only make people think that I was an amateur. The fine clothes you have bought me I shall not be able to wear, except when I want you to think me nice. I shall have to learn Italian, of which I don’t know a word, and French, of which I know very little.”

Owen looked at her, at once pleased and surprised.

“You’re quite right,” he said; “this carriage and these horses are unsuitable to your present circumstances. The chestnuts took my fancy . . . however, I haven’t paid for them. I’ll send them back for the present; they, or a pair like them, will come in all right later on.”

After a slight pause she said,—

“I do not want to run into your debt more than I can help. If my voice develops, if it be all you think it is, I shall be able to go on the stage in a year, at latest in a year and a half from now. My mother was paid three and four hundred a week. Unless I fail altogether, I shall have no difficulty in paying you back the money you so generously lent me.”

“But why do you want to cost me nothing?”

“I don’t know. Why shouldn’t I pay you back? If

I succeed I shall have plenty of money; if I don't, I daresay you'll overlook the debt. Owen, dear, how enchanting it is to be with you in Paris, to wear these beautiful dresses, to drive in this carriage, to see those lovely horses, and to wonder what the races will be like. You're not disappointed in me? I'm as nice as you thought I'd be?"

"Yes; you're a great deal nicer. I was afraid at one time you might be a bore; scruples of conscience aren't very interesting. But somehow in your case they don't seem to matter."

"I do try to keep them to myself. There's no use in inflicting one's personal worries on others. I am all one thing or all the other. When I'm with you, I'm afraid I'm all the other."

He had always known that he could "make something of her," as he used to put it to himself, but she exceeded his expectations; she certainly was an admirable mistress. Her scruples did not bore him; they were, indeed, a novelty and an excitement which he would not willingly be without. Moreover, she was so intelligent! he had not yet heard her make a stupid remark. She had always been interested in the right things; and, excited by her admiration of the wooden balconies—the metal lanterns hanging from them, the vases standing on the steps leading to the porticoes, he attempted a reading of these villas.

"How plain is this paganism," he said. "Seeing them, we cannot but think of their deep feather beds, the savoury omelettes made of new-laid eggs served at midday, and followed by juicy beefsteaks cooked in the best butter. Those villas are not only typical of Passy,

but of France; their excellent life ascends from the peasant's cottage; they are the result of agriculture, which is the original loveliness. All that springs from agriculture must be beautiful, just as all that springs from commerce must be vile. Manchester is the ugliest place on the earth, and the money of every individual cotton-spinner serves to multiply the original ugliness—the house he builds, the pictures he buys. Isn't that so?"

"I can't say, dear; I have never been to Manchester. But how can you think of such things?"

"Don't you like those villas? I love them, and their comfort is secure; its root is in the earth, the only thing we are sure of. There is more of pagan life and sentiment in France than elsewhere. Would you not like to have a Passy villa? Would you not like to live here?"

"One of these days I may buy one, then you shall come to breakfast, and I'll give you an omelette and a beefsteak. For the present, I shall have to put up with something less expensive. I must be near my music-lessons. Thanks all the same, dearest."

She sought a reason for the expression of thoughtfulness which had suddenly come over his face.

"I don't know how it is, but I never see Paris without thinking of Balzac. You don't know Balzac; one of these days you must read him. The moment I begin to notice Paris, I think, feel, see and speak Balzac. That dark woman yonder, with her scornful face, fills my mind with Balzacian phrases—the celebrated courtesan, celebrated for her diamonds and her vices, and so on. The little woman in the next carriage, the *Princesse de Saxeville*, would delight him. He would devote an entire

page to the description of her coat of arms—three azure panels, and so on. And I should read it, for Balzac made all the world beautiful, even snobbery. All interesting people are Balzicians. The moment I know that a man is an admirer of Balzac, a sort of Freemasonry is established between us, and I am interested in him, as I should be in a man who had loved a woman whom I had loved.”

“But I shouldn’t like a woman because I knew that you had loved her.”

“You are a woman; but men who have loved the same woman will seek each other from the ends of the earth, and will take an intense pleasure in their recollections. I don’t know whether that aphorism is to be found in Balzac; if not, it is an accident that prevented him from writing it, for it is quite Balzacian—only he would give it a turn, an air of philosophic distinction to which it would be useless for me to pretend.”

“I wonder if I should like him. Tell me about him.”

“You would be more likely than most women to appreciate him. Supposing you put the matter to the test. You would not accept these horses, maybe you will not refuse a humbler present—an edition of Balzac. There’s a very good one in fifty-two volumes.”

“So many as that?”

“Yes; and not one too many—each is a masterpiece. In this enormous work there are something like two thousand characters, and these appear in some books in principal, in other books in subordinate, parts. Balzac speaks of them as we should of real people. A young

lady is going to the opera and to a ball afterwards, and he says,—

“It is easy to imagine her delight and expectation, for was she not going to meet the delicious Duchesse de la Maufregneuse, and her friend the celebrated Madame d’Espard, Coralie, Lucien de Rubempré and Rastignac.”

“These people are only mentioned in the *Mémoires de deux jeunes Mariées*. But they are heroes and heroines in other books, in *Les Secrets de la Princesse de Cadignan*, *Le Père Goriot*, and *Les Illusions Perdues*. Before you even begin to know Balzac, you must have read at least twenty volumes. There is a vulgarity about those who don’t know Balzac; we, his worshippers, recognise in each other a refinement of sense and a peculiar comprehension of life. We are beings apart; we are branded with the seal of that great mind. You should hear us talk among ourselves. Everyone knows that Popinot is the sublime hero of *L’Interdiction*, but for the moment some feeble Balzacian does not remember the other books he appears in, and is ashamed to ask. . . . But I’m boring you.”

“No, no; I love to listen. It is more interesting than any play.”

Owen looked at her questioningly, as if he doubted the flattery, which, at the bottom of his heart, he knew to be quite sincere.

“You cannot understand Paris until you have read Balzac. Balzac discovered Paris; he created Paris. You remember just now what I said of those villas? I was thinking at the moment of Balzac. For he begins one story by a reading of the human characteristics to be perceived in its streets. He says that there are mean

streets, and streets that are merely honest; there are young streets about whose morality the public has not yet formed any opinion; there are murderous streets—streets older than the oldest hags; streets that we may esteem—clean streets, work-a-day streets and commercial streets. Some streets, he says, begin well and end badly. The Rue Montmartre, for instance, has a fine head, but it ends in the tail of a fish. How good that is. You don't know the Rue Montmartre? I'll point it out next time we're that way. But you know the Rue de la Paix?"

"Yes; what does that mean?"

"The Rue de la Paix, he says, is a large street, and a grand street, but it certainly doesn't awaken the gracious and noble thoughts that the Rue Royale suggests to every sensitive mind; nor has it the dignity of the Place Vendôme. The Place de la Bourse, he says, is in the daytime babble and prostitution, but at night it is beautiful. At two o'clock in the morning, by moonlight, it is a dream of old Greece."

"I don't see much in that. What you said about the villas was quite as good."

Fearing that the conversation lacked a familiar and personal interest, he sought a transition, an idea by which he could connect it with Evelyn herself. With this object he called her attention to two young men who, he pretended, reminded him of Rastignac and Morny. That woman in the mail phaeton was an incipient Madame Marneffe; that dark woman now looking at them with ardent, amorous eyes might be an Esther.

"We're all creatures of Balzac's imagination. You,"

he said, turning a little so that he might see her better, "are intensely Balzacian."

"Do I remind you of one of his characters?" Evelyn became more keenly interested. "Which one?"

"You are more like a character he might have painted than anyone I can think of in the *Human Comedy*. He certainly would have been interested in your temperament. But I can't think which of his women is like you. You are more like the adorable Lucien; that is to say, up to the present."

"Who was Lucien?"

"He was the young poet whom all Paris fell in love with. He came up to Paris with a married woman; I think they came from Angouleme. I haven't read *Lost Illusions* for twenty years. She and he were the stars in the society of some provincial town, but when they arrived in Paris each thought the other very common and countrified. He compares her with Madame d'Espard; she compares him with Rastignac; Balzac completes the picture with a touch of pure genius—"They forgot that six months would transform them both into exquisite Parisians." How good that is, what wonderful insight into life!"

"And do they become Parisians?"

"Yes, and then they both regret that they broke off—"

"Could they not begin it again?"

"No; it is rarely that a *liaison* can be begun again—life is too hurried. We may not go back; the past may never become the present—ghosts come between."

"Then if I broke it off with you, or you broke it off with me, it would be for ever?"



“Do not let us discuss such unpleasant possibilities;” and he continued to search the *Human Comedy* for a woman resembling Evelyn. “You are essentially Balzacian—all interesting things are—but I cannot remember any woman in the *Human Comedy* like you—Honorine, perhaps.”

“What does she do?”

“She’s a married woman who has left her husband for a lover who very soon deserts her. Her husband tries in vain to love other women, but his wife holds his affections and he makes every effort to win her back. The story is mainly an account of these efforts.”

“Does he succeed?”

“Yes. Honorine goes back to her husband, but it cost her her life. She cannot live with a man she doesn’t love. That is the point of the story.”

“I wonder why that should remind you of me?”

“There is something delicate, rare, and mystical about you both. But I can’t say I place *Honorine* very high among Balzac’s works. There are beautiful touches in it, but I think he failed to realise the type. You are more virile, more real to me than Honorine. No; on the whole, Balzac has not done you. He perceived you dimly. If he had lived it might, it certainly would, have been otherwise. There is, of course, the Duchesse Langeais. There is something of you in her; but she is no more than a brilliant sketch, no better than Honorine. There is Eugene Grandet. But no; Balzac never painted your portrait.”

Like all good talkers, he knew how to delude his listeners into the belief that they were taking an important part in the conversation. He allowed them to

He speak, he solicited their opinions, and listened as if they awakened the keenest interest in him; he developed what they had vaguely suggested. He paused before their remarks, he tempted his listener into personal appreciations and sudden revelations of character. He addressed an intimate vanity and became the inspiration of every choice, and in a mysterious reticulation of emotions, tastes and ideas, life itself seemed to converge to his ultimate authority. And having induced recognition of the wisdom of his wishes, he knew how to make his yoke agreeable to bear; it never galled the back that bore it, it lay upon it soft as a silken gown. Evelyn enjoyed the gentle imposition of his will. Obedience became a delight, and in its intellectual sloth life floated as in an opium-dream without end, dissolving as the sunset dissolves in various modulations. Obedience is a divine sensualism; it is the sensualism of the saints; its lassitudes are animated with deep pauses and thrills of love and worship. We lift our eyes, and a great joy fills our hearts, and we sink away into blisses of remote consciousness. The delights of obedience are the highest felicities of love, and these Evelyn had begun to experience. She had ascended already into this happy nowhere. She was aware of him, and a little of the brilliant goal whither he was leading her. She was the instrument, he was the hand that played upon it, and all that had happened from hour to hour in their mutual existence revealed in some new and unexpected way his mastery over life. She had seen great ladies bowing to him, smiling upon him in a way that told their intention to get him away from her. She had heard scraps of his conversation with the

French and English noblemen who had stopped to speak to him; and now, as Owen was getting into the victoria, after a brief visit to some great lady who had sent her footman to fetch him, a man, who looked to Evelyn like a sort of superior groom, came breathless to their carriage. He had only just heard that Owen was on the course. He was the great English trainer from Chantilly, and had tried Armide II. to win with a stone more on his back than he had to carry.

“That is the horse,” and Owen pointed to a big chestnut. “The third horse—orange and white sleeves, black cap . . . they are going now for the preliminary canter. We shall have just time to back him. There is a Pari Mutuel a little way down the course; or shall we back the horse in the ring? No, it is too late to get across the course. The Pari Mutuel will do. Isn't the racecourse like an English lawn, like an overgrown croquet ground? and the horses go round by these plantations.”

It was not fashionable, he admitted, for a lady to leave her carriage, but no one knew her. It did not matter, and the spectacle amused her. But there was only time to catch a glimpse of beautiful toilettes, actresses and princesses, and the young men standing on the steps of the carriages. Owen whispered the names of the most celebrated, and told her she should know them when she was on the stage. At present it would be better for her to live quietly—unknown; her lessons would take all her time. He talked as he hastened her towards where a crowd had collected. She saw what looked like a small omnibus, with a man distributing tickets. Owen took five louis out of her

purse and handed them to the man, who in return handed her a ticket. They would see the race better from their carriage, but it was pleasanter to stroll about the warm grass and admire the little woods which surrounded this elegant pleasure-ground, the white painted stands with all their flags flying on the blue summer air, the glitter of the carriages, the colour of the parasols, the bright jackets and caps of the jockeys, the rhythmical movement of the horses. Some sailed along with their heads low, others bounded, their heads high in the air. While Owen watched Evelyn's pleasure, his face expressed a cynical good-humour. He was glad she was pleased, and he was flattered that he was influencing her. No longer was she wasting her life, the one life which she had to live. He was proud of his disciple, and he delighted in her astonishment, when, having made sure that Armide II. had won, he led her back to the Pari Mutuel, and, bidding her hold out her hands, saw that forty louis were poured into them.

Then Evelyn could not believe that she was in her waking senses, and it took some time to explain to her how she had won so much money; and when she asked why all the poor people did not come and do likewise, since it was so easy, Owen said that he had had more sport seeing her win five and thirty louis than he had when he won the gold cup at Ascot. It almost inclined him to go in for racing again. Evelyn could not understand the circumstance and, still explaining the odds, he told the coachman that they would not wait for the last race. He had tied her forty louis into her pocket-handkerchief, and feeling the weight of the gold in her hand she leant back in the victoria, lost in the bright,

penetrating happiness of that summer evening. Paris, graceful and indolent—Paris returning through a whirl of wheels, through pleasure-grounds, green swards and long, shining roads—instilled a fever of desire into the blood, and the soul cried that life should be made wholly of such light distraction.

The wistful light seemed to breathe all vulgarity from the procession of pleasure-seekers returning from the races. An aspect of vision stole over the scene. Owen pointed to the group of pines by the lake's edge, to the gondola-like boat moving through the pink stillness; and the cloud in the water, he said, was more beautiful than the cloud in heaven. He spoke of the tea-house on the island, of the shade of the trees, of the lush grass, of the chatter of the nursemaids and ducks. He proposed, and she accepted, that they should go there to-morrow. The secret of their lips floated into their eyes, its echoes drifted through their souls like a faint strain played on violins; and neither spoke for fear of losing one of the faint vibrations. Evelyn settled her embroidered gown over her feet as the carriage swept around the Arc de Triomphe.

"That is our rose garden," he said, pointing to Paris, which lay below them glittering in the evening light, "You remember that I used to read you Omar?"

"Yes, I remember. Not three days ago, yet it seems far away."

"But you do not regret—you would not go back?"

"I could not if I would."

"It has been a charming day, hasn't it?"

"Yes."

"And it isn't over yet. I have ordered dinner at

the Café des Ambassadeurs. I've got a table on the balcony. The balcony overlooks the garden, and the stage is at the end of the garden, so we shall see the performance as we dine. The comic songs, the can-can dancers and the acrobats will be a change after Wagner. I hope you'll like the dinner."

He took a card from his pocket and read the menu.

"There is no place in Paris where you get a better *petite marmite* than the Ambassadeurs. I have ordered, you see, *filets de volaille, pointes d'asperges*. The *filets de volaille* are the backs of the chickens, the tit-bits; the rest—the legs and the wings—go to make the stock; that is why the *marmite* is so good. *Timbale de homard à l'Americaine* is served with a brown sauce garnished with rice. You ought to find it excellent. If we were in autumn I should have ordered a pheasant *Sauvaroff*. A bird being impossible, I allowed myself to be advised by the head waiter. He assured me they have some very special legs of lamb; they have just received them from Normandy; you will not recognise it as the stringy, tasteless thing that in England we know as leg of lamb. *Soufflé au paprike*—this *soufflé* is seasoned not with red pepper, which would produce an intolerable thirst, nor with ordinary pepper, which would be arid and tasteless, but with an intermediate pepper which will just give a zest to the last glass of champagne. There is a *parfait*—that comes before the *soufflé*, of course. I don't think we can do much better."

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## XI.

THE appointment had been made, and he was coming back at half-past three to take her to Madame Savelli, the great singing mistress, and at four her fate would be decided. She would then learn beyond cavil or doubt if she had, or was likely to acquire, sufficient voice for grand opera. So much Madame Savelli would know for certain, though she could not predict success. So many things were required, and to fail in one was to fail. . . . Owen expected Isolde and Brunnhilde, and she was to achieve in these parts something which had not been achieved. She was to sing them; hitherto, according to Owen, they had been merely howled. Other triumphs were but preparatory to this ultimate triumph, and if she fell short of his ideal, he would take no further interest in her voice. However well she might sing Margaret, he would not really care; as for Lucia and Violetta, it would be his amiability that would keep him in the stalls. To-day her fate was to be decided. If Madame Savelli were to say that she had no voice—she couldn't very well say that, but she might say that she had only a nice voice, which, if properly trained, could be heard to advantage in a drawing-room—then what was she to do? She couldn't live with Owen as his kept mistress; in that case she would be no better than the women she had seen at the races. She grew suddenly pale. What was she to do? The choice lay between drowning herself and going back to her father.

Only yesterday she had received such a kind letter from him, offering to forgive everything if she would

come back. So like her dear, unpractical dad to ask her to go back and suffer all the disgrace without having attained the end for which she had left home. If, as Owen had said, she went back with the finest soprano voice in Europe, and an engagement to sing at Covent Garden at a salary of £400 a week, the world would close its ears to scandal, the world would deny that any violation of its rules had been committed; but to return after an escapade of a week in Paris would be ruin. So, at Owen's persuasion, she had written a letter to her father explaining why she could not return. But her inability to obey her father did not detract from the fear which her disobedience caused her. She thought of the old man whom she loved so well grieving his heart out and thinking her, whom he loved so dearly, cruel and ungrateful. But what could she do? Go back and bring disgrace upon herself and upon her father? Ah, if she had known beforehand the suffering she was enduring, she did not think she would ever have gone away with Owen. It was all wrong, very wrong, and she had merited this punishment by her own grievous fault. . . . Lady Duckle was coming that evening—the woman whom she was going to live with—an unfortunate day for her to arrive; if Madame Savelli thought that she, Evelyn, had no voice to speak of, the secret could not be kept from her. Lady Duckle would know her for a poor little fool who had been wheedled from her home, and on the pretext that she was to become the greatest singer in Europe. It was all horrid.

And when Owen returned he found Evelyn in tears. But with his scrupulous tact he avoided any allusion to her grief, and while she bathed her eyes she thanked



him in her heart for this. Her father would have fretted and fussed and maddened her with questions, but Owen cheered her with sanguine smiles and seemed to look forward to her success as a natural sequence, any interruption to which it would be idle to anticipate; and he cleverly drew her thoughts from doubt in her own ability into consideration of the music she was going to sing. She suggested the jewel song in "Faust," or the waltz in "Romeo and Juliet." But he was of the opinion that she had better sing the music she was in the habit of singing; for choice, one of Purcell's songs, the "Epithalamium," or the song from the "Indian Queen."

"Savelli doesn't know the music; it will interest her. The other things she hears every day of her life."

"But I haven't the music—I don't know the accompaniments."

"The music is here."

"It is very thoughtful of you."

"Henceforth it must be my business to be thoughtful."

They descended the hotel staircase very slowly, seeing themselves in the tall mirrors on the landings. The bright courtyard glittered through the glass verandah; it was full of carriages. Owen signed to his coachman. They got into the victoria, and a moment after were passing through the streets, turning in and out. But not a word did they speak, for the poison of doubt had entered into his, as it had into her, soul. He had begun to ask himself if he was mistaken—if she had really this wonderful voice, or if it only existed in his imagination? True it was that everyone who had heard her sing thought the same; but the last time he had heard

her, had not her voice sounded a little thin? He had doubts, too, about her power of passionate interpretation. . . . She had a beautiful voice—there could be no doubt on that point—but a beautiful voice might be heard to a very great disadvantage on the stage. Moreover, could she sing florid music? Of course, the “Epithalamium” she was going to sing was as florid as it could be. Purcell had suited it to his own singing. . . . A woman did not always sing to an orchestra as well as to a single instrument. That was only when the singer was an insufficient musician. Evelyn was an excellent musician. . . . If a woman had the loveliest voice, and was as great a musician as Wagner himself, it would profit her nothing if she had not the strength to stand the wear and tear of rehearsals. He looked at Evelyn, and calculated her physical strength. She was a rather tall and strongly-built girl, but the Wagnerian bosom was wanting. He had always considered a large bosom to be a dreadful deformity. A bosom should be an indication, a hint; a positive statement he viewed with abhorrence. And he paused to think if he would be willing to forego his natural and cultured taste in female beauty and accept those extravagant growths of flesh if they could be proved to be musical necessities. But Evelyn was by no means flat-chested . . . and he remembered certain curves and plenitudes with satisfaction. Then, catching sight of Evelyn’s frightened face, he forced himself to invent conversation. That was the Madeleine, a fine building, in a way; and the boulevard they had just entered was the Boulevard Malesherbes, which was called after a celebrated French lawyer. The name Haussmann, recalled the Second Empire, and he ransacked his memory

for anecdotes. But soon his conversation grew stilted—even painful. He could continue it no longer, and, taking her hand, he assured her that, if she did not sing well, she should come to Madame Savelli again. Evelyn's face lighted up, and she said that what had frightened her was the finality of the decision—a few minutes in which she might not be able to sing at all. Owen reproved her. How could she think that he would permit such a barbarism? It really did not matter a brass button whether she sang well or ill on this particular day; if she did not do herself justice, another appointment should be made. He had money enough to hire Madame Savelli to listen to her for the next six months, if it were required.

He was truly sorry for her. Poor little girl! it really was a dreadful ordeal. Yet he had never seen her look better. What a difference dressing her had made! Her manner, too, had improved. That was the influence of his society. By degrees, he'd get rid of all her absurd ideas. But he sorely wished that Madame Savelli's verdict would prove him right—not for his sake—it didn't matter to him—such teeth, such hands, such skin, such eyes and hair! Voice or no voice, he had certainly got the most charming mistress in Europe! But, if she did happen to have a great voice it would make matters so much better for them. He had plenty of money—twenty thousand lying idle—but it was better that she should earn money. It would save her reputation . . . in every way it would be better. If she had a voice, and were a success, this *liaison* would be one of the most successful things in his life. If he were wrong,

they'd have to get on as best they could, but he didn't think that he could be altogether mistaken.

The door was opened by a footman in livery, and they ascended half-a-dozen steps into the house. Then, off a wide passage, a door was opened, and they found themselves in a great saloon with polished oak floor. There was hardly any furniture—three or four chairs, some benches against the walls and a grand piano. The mantelpiece was covered with photographs, and there were life-sized photographs in frames on the walls. Owen pointed to one of a somewhat stout woman in evening-dress, and he whispered an illustrious name.

A moment after madame entered.

She was of medium height, thin and somewhat flat-chested. Her hair was iron-grey, and the face was marked with patches of vivid colouring. The mouth was a long, determined line, and the lines of the hips asserted themselves beneath the black silk dress. She glanced quickly at Evelyn as she went towards Sir Owen.

"This is the young lady of whom you spoke to me?"

"Yes, madame, it is she. Let me introduce you. Madame Savelli—Miss Evelyn Innes."

"Does mademoiselle wish to sing as a professional or as an amateur?"

The question was addressed at once to Evelyn and to Owen, and, while Evelyn hesitated with the French words, Owen answered,—

"Mademoiselle will be guided by your advice."

"They all say that; however, we shall see. Will

mademoiselle sing to me? Does mademoiselle speak French?"

"Yes, a little," Evelyn replied, timidly.

"Oh, very good. Has mademoiselle studied music?"

"Yes; my father is a musician, but he only cares for the very early music, and I have hardly ever touched a piano, but I play the harpsichord. . . . My instrument is the viola da gamba."

"The harpsichord and the viola da gamba! That is very interesting, but"—and Madame Savelli laughed good-naturedly—"unfortunately we have no harpsichord here, nor yet a spinet; only the humble piano."

"Miss Innes will be quite satisfied with your piano, Madame Savelli."

"Now, Sir Owen, I will not have you get cross with me. I must always have my little pleasantry. Does he get cross with you like that, Miss Innes?"

"I didn't get cross with you, Madame Savelli."

"You wanted to, but I would not let you—and because I regretted I had not a harpsichord, only a humble piano! Mademoiselle knows, I suppose, all the church songs. I only know operas. . . . You see, Sir Owen, you cannot silence me; I will have my little pleasantry. I only know opera, and have nothing but the humble piano. But, joking apart, mademoiselle wants to study serious opera."

"Yes; mademoiselle intends to study for the stage, not for the church."

"Then I will teach her."

"You have three classes here. Mademoiselle would like to go into the opera class."

"In the opera class! How you do go on, Sir Owen! If mademoiselle can go into the opera class next year, I shall be more than satisfied, astonished."

"Perhaps you'll be able to say better if mademoiselle will be able to go into the opera class when you have heard her sing."

"But I know, my dear Sir Owen, that is impossible. You don't believe me. Well, I am prepared to be surprised. It matters not to me. Mademoiselle can go into the opera class in three months if she is sufficiently advanced. Will mademoiselle sing to me? Are these her songs?" Madame Savelli took the music out of Sir Owen's hands. "I can see that this music would sound better on the harpsichord or the spinet. . . . Now, Sir Owen, I see you are getting angry again."

"I'm not angry, Madame Savelli—no one could be angry with you—only mademoiselle is rather nervous."

"Then perhaps my pleasantry was inexpedient. Let me see—this is it, isn't it?" she said, running her fingers through the first bars. . . . "But perhaps you would like to accompany mademoiselle?"

"Which would you like, Evelyn?"

"You, dear; I should be too nervous with Madame Savelli."

Owen explained, and madame gave him her place at the piano with alacrity, and took a seat far away by the fireplace. Evelyn sang Purcell's beautiful wedding song, full of roulades, grave pauses and long-sustained notes, and when she had finished Owen signed to madame not to speak. "Now, the song from the 'Indian Queen.' You sang capitally," he whispered to Evelyn.

And, thus encouraged, she poured all her soul and all the pure melody of her voice into this music, at once religious and voluptuous, seemingly the rapture of a nun that remembrance has overtaken and for the moment overpowered. When she had done, Madame Savelli jumped from her chair, and seizing her by both hands said,—

“If you’ll stop with me for a year, I’ll make something wonderful of you.”

Then without another word she ran out of the room, leaving the door open behind her, and a few moments after they heard her calling on the stairs to her husband.

“Come down at once; come down, I’ve found a star.”

“Then she thinks I’ve a good voice?”

“I should think so indeed. She won’t get over the start you’ve given her for the next six months.”

“Are you sure, Owen? Are you sure she’s not laughing at us?”

“Laughing at us? She’s calling for her husband to come down. She’s shouting to him that she’s found a star.”

Then the joy that rose up in Evelyn’s heart blinded her eyes so that she could not see, and she seemed to lose sense of what was happening. It was as if she were going to swoon.

“I have told her,” Madame Savelli said to her husband, who followed her into the room, “that, if she will remain a year with me, I’ll make something wonderful of her. And you will stay with me, my dear. . . .”

Owen thought that this was the moment to mention the fact that Evelyn was the daughter of the famous Madame Innes.

Monsieur Savelli raised his bushy eyebrows.

"I knew your mother, mademoiselle. If you have a voice like hers—"

"In a year, if she will remain with me, she will have twice the voice her mother had. Mademoiselle must go into the opera class at once."

"I thought you said that such a thing could not be; that no pupil of yours had ever gone straight into the opera class?"

Madame Savelli's grey eyes laughed.

"Ah! I was mistaken. . . . I had forgotten that all the other classes are full. There is no room for Miss Innes in the other classes. It is against all precedence; it will create much jealousy, but it can't be helped. She must go straight into the opera class. When will mademoiselle begin? The sooner the better."

"Next Monday. Will that be soon enough?"

"On Monday I'll begin to teach her the *rôle* of Marguerite. Such a thing was never heard of; but then mademoiselle's voice is one such as one never hears."

Turning to her husband, she said,—

"You see my husband is looking at me. Yes, you are looking at me. You think I have gone mad, but he'll not think I've gone mad when he hears mademoiselle sing. Will mademoiselle be so kind?"

Evelyn felt she could not sing again, and, turning suddenly away, she walked to the window and watched the cabs going by. She heard Owen ask Madame and Monsieur Savelli to excuse her. He said that madame's praise had proved too much for her; that her nerves had given way. Then he came over and spoke to her gently. She looked at him through her tears; but she could not trust herself to speak, nor yet to walk across



the room and bid Monsieur and Madame Savelli good-bye. She felt she must die of shame or happiness, and plucked at Owen's sleeve. She was glad to get out of that room; and the moments seemed like years. They could not speak in the glaring of the street. But fortunately their way was through the park, and when they passed under the shade of some overhanging boughs, she looked at him.

"Well, little girl, what do you think? Everything is all right now. It happened even better than I expected."

She wiped away her tears.

"How foolish I am to cry like this. But I could not bear it; my nerves gave way. It was so sudden. I'm afraid those people will think me a little fool. But you don't know, Owen, what I have suffered these last few days. I don't want to worry you, but there were times when I thought I couldn't stand it any longer. I thought that God might punish me by taking my voice from me. Just fancy if I had not been able to sing at all! It would have made you look a fool. You would have hated me for that; but now, even if I should lose my voice between this and next Monday. . . . Did I sing well, Owen? Did I sing as well as ever you heard me sing?"

"I've heard you sing better, but you sang well enough to convince Savelli that you'll have the finest voice in Europe by this time next year. That's good enough for you, isn't it? You don't want any more, do you?"

"No, no, half that would do, half that; I only want to know that it is all true." Tears again rose to her eyes. "I mean," she said, laughing, "that I want to know that I am sitting by you in the carriage; that Ma-

dame Savelli has heard me sing; that she said that I should be a great singer. Did she say that?"

"Yes, she said you would be a great singer."

"Then why does it not seem true? But nothing seems true, not even Paris. It all seems like a dazzling, scattered dream, like spots of light, and every moment I fear that it will pass away, and that I shall wake up and find myself in Dulwich; that I shall see my viola da gamba standing in the corner; that a rap at the front door will tell me that a pupil has come for a lesson."

"Do you remember the lessons that you gave me on the viola da gamba?"

She looked at him beseechingly.

"Then it is true. I suppose it is true, but I wish I could feel this life to be true."

She looked up and saw the clouds moving across the sky; she looked down and saw the people passing along the streets.

"In a few days, in a few weeks, this life will seem quite real. But, if you cannot bear the present, how will you bear the success that is to come?"

"When I was a tiny girl, the other girls used to say, 'Evey, dear, do make that funny noise in your throat,' and that was my trill. But since mother's death everything went wrong; it seemed that I would never get out of Dulwich. I never should have if it had not been for you. I had ceased to believe that I had a voice."

"In that throat there are thousands of pounds."

Evelyn put her hand to her throat to assure herself that it was still on her shoulders.

"I wonder, I wonder. To think that in a year—in

a year and a half—I shall be singing on the stage! They will throw me bouquets, I suppose?”

“Oh, yes, you need have no fear about that; this park would not suffice to grow all the flowers that will be thrown at your feet.”

“It seems impossible that I—poor, miserable I—should be moving towards such splendour. I wonder if I shall ever get there, and, if I do get there, if I shall be able to live through it. I cannot yet see myself the great singer you describe. Yet I suppose it is all quite certain.”

“Quite certain.”

“Then why can't I imagine it?”

“We cannot imagine ourselves in other than our present circumstances; the most commonplace future is as unimaginable as the most extravagant.”

“I suppose that is so.”

The carriage stopped at the Continental, and he asked her what she would like to do. It was just five.

“Come and have a cup of tea in the Rue Cambon.”

She consented, and, after tea, he said, standing with one foot on the carriage step,—

“If you'll allow me to advise you, you will go for a drive in the Bois by yourself. I want to see some pictures.”

“May I not come?”

“Certainly, if you like, but I don't think you could give your attention to pictures; you're thinking of yourself, and you want to be alone with yourself—nothing else would interest you.”

A pretty flush of shame came into her cheeks. He had seen to the bottom of her heart, and discovered that

of which she herself was not aware. But, now that he had told her, she knew that she did want to be alone—not alone in a room, but alone among a great number of people. A drive in the Bois would be a truly delicious indulgence of her egotism. The Champs Elysées floated about her happiness, the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne seemed to stretch out and to lead to the theatre of her glory; and, looking at the lake, its groups of pines, its gondola-like boats, she recalled, and with little thrills of pleasure, the exact words that madame had used,—

“If you will stay a year with me, I’ll make something wonderful of you.” “Was there ever such happiness? Can it be true? Then I am wonderful—perhaps the most wonderful person here. Those women, however haughty they may look, what are they to me? I am wonderful. With not one would I change places, for I am going to be something wonderful.” And the word sang sweeter in her ears than the violins in “Lohengrin.” . . . “Owen loves me. I have the nicest lover in the world. All this good fortune has happened to me. Oh, to me! If father could only know. But Owen thinks that will be all right. Father will forgive me when I come back the wonderful singer that I am—that I shall be. . . . If anyone could hear me, they would think I was mad. I can’t help it. . . . She’ll make something wonderful of me, and father will forgive me everything. We always loved each other. We’ve always been pals, dear dad. Oh, how I wish he had heard Madame Savelli say, ‘If you will stop with me a year, I’ll make something wonderful of you!’ I will write to him . . . it will cheer him up.”

Then, seeing the poplars that lined the avenue, beautiful and tall in the evening, she thought of Owen. He had said they were the trees of the evening. She had not understood, and he had explained that we only see poplars in the sunset; they appear with the bats and the first stars.

“How clever he is, and he is my lover! It is dreadfully wicked, but I wonder what Madame Savelli said to her husband about my voice. She meant all she said; there can be no doubt about that.”

Catching sight of some passing faces, Evelyn thought how, in two little years, at this very hour, the same people would be returning from the Bois to hear her sing—what? Elsa? Elizabeth? Margaret? She imagined herself in these parts, and sang fragments of the music as it floated into her mind. She was impelled to extravagance. She would have liked to stand up in her carriage and sing aloud, nothing seemed to matter, until she remembered that she must not make a fool of herself before Lady Duckle. And that she might walk the fever out of her blood, she called to the coachman to stop, and she walked down the Champs Elysées rapidly, not pausing to take breath till she reached the Place de la Concorde; and she almost ran the rest of the way, so that she might not be late for dinner. When she entered the hotel, she came suddenly upon Owen on the verandah. He was sitting there engaged in conversation with an elderly woman—a woman of about fifty, who, catching sight of her, whispered something to him.

“Evelyn. . . . This is Lady Duckle.”

“Sir Owen has been telling me, Miss Innes, what

Madame Savelli said about your voice. I do not know how to congratulate you. I suppose such a thing has not happened before."

And her small, grey eyes gazed in envious wonderment, as if seeking to understand how such extraordinary good fortune should have befallen the tall, fair girl who stood blushing and embarrassed in her happiness. Owen drew a chair forward.

"Sit down, Evelyn, you look tired."

"No, I'm not tired . . . but I walked from the Arc de Triomphe."

"Walked! Why did you walk?"

Evelyn did not answer, and Lady Duckle said,—

"Sir Owen tells me that you'll surely succeed in singing Wagner—that I shall be converted."

"Lady Duckle is a heretic."

"No, my dear Owen, I'm not a heretic, for I recognise the greatness of the music, and I could hear it with pleasure if it were confined to the orchestra, but I can find no pleasure in listening to a voice trying to accompany a hundred instruments. I heard 'Lohengrin' last season. I was in Mrs. Ayre's box—a charming woman—her husband is an American, but he never comes to London. I presented her at the last Drawing-Room. She had a supper-party afterwards, and when she asked me what I'd have to eat, I said, 'Nothing with wings' . . . Oh, that swan!"

Her grey hair was drawn up and elaborately arranged, and Evelyn noticed three diamond rings and an emerald ring on her fat, white fingers. There had been moments, she said, when she had thought the people on the stage were making fun of them—"such booing!"—they had

all shouted themselves hoarse—such wandering from key to key.

“Hoping, I suppose, that in the end they’d hit off the right ones. And that trick of going up in fifths. And then they go up in fifths on the half notes. I said if they do that again, I’ll leave the theatre.”

Evelyn could see that Owen liked Lady Duckle, and her conversation, which at first might have seemed extravagant and a little foolish, was illuminated with knowledge and a vague sense of humour which was captivating. Her story of how she had met Rossini in her early youth, and the praise he had bestowed on her voice, and his intention of writing an opera for her, seemed fanciful enough, but every now and then some slight detail inspired the suspicion that there was perhaps more truth in what she was saying than appeared at first hearing.

“Why did he not write the opera, Olive?”

“It was just as he was ill, when he lived in Rue Monsieur. And he said he was afraid he was not equal to writing down so many notes. Poor old man! I can still see him sitting in his arm-chair.”

She seemed to have been on terms of friendship with the most celebrated men of the time. Her little book entitled *Souvenirs of Some Great Composers* was alluded to, and Owen mentioned that at that time she was the great Parisian beauty.

“But instead of going on the stage, I married Lord Duckle.”

And this early mistake she seemed to consider as sufficient explanation for all subsequent misfortunes. Evelyn wondered what these might be, and Owen said,—

“The most celebrated singers are glad to sing at Lady Duckle’s afternoons; no reputation is considered complete till it has received her sanction.”

“That is going too far, Owen; but it is true that nearly all the great singers have been heard at my house.”

Owen begged Evelyn to get ready for dinner, and as she stood waiting for the lift, she saw him resume confidential conversation with Lady Duckle. They were, she knew, making preparations for her future life, and this was the woman she was going to live with for the next few years! The thought gave her pause. She dried her hands and hastened downstairs. They were still talking in the verandah just as she had left them. Owen signed to the coachman and told him to drive to Durand’s. They were dining in a private room, and during dinner the conversation constantly harked back to the success that Evelyn had achieved that afternoon. Owen told the story in well-turned sentences. His eyes were generally fixed on Lady Duckle, and Evelyn sat listening and feeling, as Owen intended she should feel, like the heroine of a fairy tale. She laughed nervously when, imitating Madame Savelli’s accent, he described how she had said, “If you’ll stop with me for a year, I’ll make something wonderful of you.” Lady Duckle leaned across the table, glancing from time to time at Evelyn, as if to assure herself that she was still in the presence of this extraordinary person, and murmured something about having the honour of assisting at what she was sure would be a great career.

Owen noticed that Evelyn seemed preoccupied, and did not respond very eagerly to Lady Duckle’s advances.



He wondered if she suspected him of having been Lady Duckle's lover. . . . Evelyn was thinking entirely of Lady Duckle herself, trying to divine the real woman that was behind all this talk of great men and social notabilities. One phrase let drop seemed to let in some light on the mystery. Talking of her, Lady Duckle said that it was only necessary to know what road we wanted to walk in to succeed, and instantly Lady Duckle appeared to her as one who had never selected a road. She seemed to have walked a little way on all roads, and her face expressed a life of many wanderings, straying from place to place. There was nothing, as she said, worth doing that she had not done, but she had clearly accomplished nothing. As she watched her she feared, though she could not say what she feared. At bottom it was a suspicion of the deteriorating influence that Lady Duckle would exercise, must exercise, upon her—for were they not going to live together for years? And this companionship would be necessarily based on subterfuge and deceit. She would have to talk to her of her friendship for Owen. She could never speak of Owen to Lady Duckle as her lover. But as Evelyn listened to this pleasant, garrulous woman talking, and talking very well, about music and literature, she could not but feel that she liked her, and that her easy humour and want of principle would make life comfortable and careless. She was not a saint; she could not expect a saint to chaperon her; nor did she want a saint. At that moment her spirits rose. She wanted Owen, and she loved him the more for the tact he had shown in finding Lady Duckle for her. She accepted the good lady's faults with reckless enthusiasm, and when they

got back to the hotel she took the first occasion to whisper that she liked Lady Duckle and was sure they'd get on very well together.

"Owen, dear, I'm so happy, I don't know what to do with myself. I did enjoy my drive to the Bois. I never was so happy, and I don't seem to be enjoying myself enough; I should like to sit up all night to think of it."

"There's no reason why you shouldn't."

"Only I should feel tired in the morning. . . . Are you coming to my room?"

"Unless you want me not to. Do you want me to come?"

"Do I look as if I didn't?"

"Your eyes are shining like stars. It is worth while taking trouble to make you happy. You do enjoy it so. . . . We'll go upstairs now. We can't talk here, Lady Duckle is coming back. Leave your door ajar."

"You don't think she suspects?"

"It doesn't matter what people suspect, the essential is that they shouldn't know. I've lots to tell you. I've arranged everything with Lady Duckle."

"I was just telling Miss Innes that in three years she'll probably be singing at the opera house. In a year or a year and a half she'll have learnt all that Savelli can teach her. Isn't that so?"

The question was discussed for awhile, and then Lady Duckle mentioned that it was getting late. It was an embarrassing moment when Owen stopped the lift and they bade her good-night. She was on the third, they were on the second floor. As Evelyn went down the passage, Owen stood to watch her sloping shoulders;

they seemed to him like those in an old miniature. When she turned the corner a blankness came over him; things seemed to recede and he was strangely alone with himself as he strolled into his room. But standing before the glass, his heart was swollen with a great pride. He remarked in his eyes the strange, enigmatic look which he admired in Titian and Vandyke, and he thought of himself as a principle—as a force; he wondered if he were an evil influence, and lost himself in moody meditations concerning the mystery of the attractions he presented to women. But suddenly he remembered that in a few minutes she would be in his arms, and he closed his eyes as if to delight more deeply in the joy that she presented to his imagination. So intense was his desire that he could not believe that he was her lover, that he was going to her room, and that nothing could deprive him of this delight. Why should such rare delight happen to him? He did not know. What matter, since it was happening? She was his. It was like holding the rarest jewel in the world in the hollow of his hand.

That she was at that moment preparing to receive him brought a little dizziness into his eyes, and compelled him to tear off his necktie. Then, vaguely, like one in a dream, he began to undress, very slowly, for she had told him to wait a quarter of an hour before coming to her room. He examined his thin waist as he tied himself in blue silk pyjamas, and he paused to admire his long, straight feet before slipping them into a pair of black velvet slippers. He turned to glance at his watch, and to kill the last five minutes of the prescribed time he thought of Evelyn's scruples. She would

have to read certain books—Darwin and Huxley he relied upon, and he reposed considerable faith in Herbert Spencer. But there were books of a lighter kind, and their influence he believed to be not less insidious. He took one out of his portmanteau—the book which, he said, had influenced him more than any other. It opened at his favourite passage,—

“I am a man of the Homeric time; the world in which I live is not mine, and I know nothing of the society which surrounds me. I am as pagan as Alcibiades or as Phidias. . . . I never gathered on Golgotha the flowers of the Passion, and the deep stream which flowed from the side of the Crucified and made a red girdle round the world never bathed me in its tide. I believe earth to be as beautiful as heaven, and I think that precision of form is virtue. Spirituality is not my strong point; I love a statue better than a phantom.” . . . He could remember no further; he glanced at the text and was about to lay the book down, when, on second thoughts, he decided to take it with him.

Her door was ajar; he pushed it open and then stopped for a moment, surprised at his own good fortune. And he never forgot that instant's impression of her body's beauty. But before he could snatch the long gauze wrapper from her, she had slipped her arms through the sleeves, and, joyous as a sunlit morning hour, she came forward and threw herself into his arms. Even then he could not believe that some evil accident would not rob him of her. He said some words to that effect, and often tried to recall her answer to them; he was only sure that it was exquisitely characteristic of her, as were all her answers—as her answer was that

very evening when he told her that he would have to go to London at the end of the week.

“But only for some days. You don’t think that I shall be changed? You’re not afraid that I shall love you less?”

“No; I was not thinking of you, dear. I know that you’ll not be changed; I was thinking that I might be.”

He withdrew the arm that was round her, and, raising himself upon his elbow, he looked at her.

“You’ve told me more about yourself in that single phrase than if you had been talking an hour.”

“Dearest Owen, let me kiss you.”

It seemed to them wonderful that they should be permitted to kiss each other so eagerly, and it sometimes was a still more intense rapture to lie in each other’s arms and talk to each other.

The dawn surprised them still talking, and it seemed to them as if nothing had been said. He was explaining his plans for her life. They were, he thought, going to live abroad for five, six, or seven years. Then Evelyn would go to London to sing, preceded by an extraordinary reputation. But the first thing to do was to get a house in Paris.

“We cannot stop at this hotel; we must have a house. I have heard of a charming hotel in the Rue Balzac.”

“In the Rue Balzac! Is there a street called after him? Is it on account of the name you want me to live there?”

“No; I don’t think so, but perhaps the name had something to do with it—one never knows. But I always liked the street.”

“Which of his books is it like?”

*“Les Secrets de la Princesse de Cadignan.”*

They laughed and kissed each other.

“At the bottom of the street is the Avenue de Friedland; the tram passes there, and it will take you straight to Madame Savelli’s.”

The sparrows had begun to shrill in the courtyard, and their eyes ached with sleep.

“Five or six years—you’ll be at the height of your fame. They will pass only too quickly,” he added.

He was thinking what his age would be then. “And when they have passed, it will seem like a dream.”

“Like a dream,” she repeated, and she laid her face on the pillow where his had lain.

## XII.

As she lay between sleeping and waking, she strove to grasp the haunting, fugitive idea, but shadows of sleep fell, and in her dream there appeared two Tristans, a fair and a dark. When the shadows were lifted and she thought with an awakening brain, she smiled at the absurdity, and, striving to get close to her idea, to grip it about its very loins, she asked herself how much of her own life she could express in the part, for she always acted one side of her character. Her pious girlhood found expression in the Elizabeth, and what she termed the other side of her character she was going to put on the stage in the character of Isolde. Again sleep thickened, and she found it impossible to follow her idea. It eluded her; she could not grasp it. It turned to a dream, a dream which she could not understand even while she dreamed it. But as she awaked, she ut-

tered a cry. It happened to be the note she had to sing when the curtain goes up and Isolde lies on the couch yearning for Tristan, for assuagement of the fever which consumes her. All other actresses had striven to portray an Irish princess, or what they believed an Irish princess might be. But she cared nothing for the Irish princess, and a great deal for the physical and mental distress of a woman sick with love.

Her power of recalling her sensations was so intense, that in her warm bed she lived again the long, aching evenings of the long winter in Dulwich, before she went away with Owen. She saw again the spring twilight in the scrap of black garden, where she used to stand watching the stars. She remembered the dread craving to worship them, the anguish of remorse and fear on her bed, her visions of distant countries and the gleam of eyes which looked at her through the dead of night. How miserable she had been in that time—in those months. She had wanted to sing, and she could not, and she had wanted—she had not known what was the matter with her. That feeling (how well she remembered it!) as if she wanted to go mad! And all those lightnesses of the brain she could introduce in the opening scene—the very opening cry was one of them. And with these two themes she thought she could create an Isolde more intense than the Isolde of the fat women whom she had seen walking about the stage, lifting their arms and trying to look like sculpture.

No one whom she had seen had attempted to differentiate between Isolde before she drinks and after she has drunk the love potion, and, to avoid this mistake, she felt that she would only have to be true to herself.

After the love potion had been drunk, the moment of her life to put on the stage was its moment of highest sexual exaltation. Which was that? There were so many, she smiled in her doze. Perhaps the most wonderful day of her life was the day Madame Savelli had said, "If you'll stay with me for a year, I'll make something wonderful of you." She recalled the drive in the Bois, and she saw again the greensward, the poplars, and the stream of carriages. She had hardly been able to resist springing up in the carriage and singing to the people; she had wanted to tell them what Madame Savelli had said. She had wished to cry to them, "In two years all you people will be going to the opera to hear me." What had stopped her was the dread that it might not happen. But it had happened! That was the evening she had met Olive. She could see the exact spot. Although Olive had only just arrived, she had been up to her room and put on a pair of slippers. They had dined at a *café*, and all through dinner she had longed to be alone with Owen, and after dinner the time had seemed so long. Before going up in the lift he had asked her if he might come to her room. In a quarter of an hour, she had said, but he had come sooner than she expected, and she remembered slipping her arm into a gauze wrapper. How she had flung herself into his arms! That was the moment of her life to put upon the stage when she and Tristan look at each other after drinking the love potion.

In the second act Tristan lives through her. She is the will to live; and if she ultimately consents to follow him into the shadowy land, it is for love of him. But of his desire for death she understands nothing; all



through the duet it is she who desires to quench this desire with kisses. That was her conception of women's mission, and that was her own life with Owen; it was her love that compelled him to live down his despondencies. So her Isolde would have an intense and a personal life that no Isolde had had before. And in holding up her own soul to view, she would hold up the universal soul, and people would be afraid to turn their heads lest they should catch each other's eyes. But was not a portrayal of sexual passion such as she intended very sinful? It could not fail to suggest sinful thoughts. . . . She could not help what folk thought—that was their affair. She had turned her back upon all such scruples, and this last one she contemptuously picked up and tossed aside like a briar.

Her eyes opened and she gazed sleepily into the twilight of mauve curtains, and dreaded her maid's knock. "It must be nearly eight," she thought, and she strove to pick up the thread of her lost thoughts. But a sharp rap at her door awakened her, and a tall, spare figure crossed the room. As the maid was about to draw the curtains, Evelyn cried to her,—

"Oh, wait a moment, Merat. . . . I'm so tired. I didn't get to bed till two o'clock."

"Mademoiselle forgets that she told me to awaken her very early. Mademoiselle said she wanted to go for a long drive to the other end of London before she went to rehearsal."

Merat's logic seemed a little severe for eight o'clock in the morning, and Evelyn believed that her conception of Isolde had suffered from the interruption.

"Then I am not to draw the curtains? Mademoiselle

will sleep a little longer. I will return when it is time for mademoiselle to go to rehearsal."

"Did you say it was half-past eight, Merat?"

"Yes, mademoiselle. The coachman is not quite sure of the way, and will have to ask it. This will delay him."

"Oh, yes, I know. . . . But I must sleep a little longer."

"Then mademoiselle will not get up. I will take mademoiselle's chocolate away."

"No, I'll have my chocolate," Evelyn said, rousing herself. "Merat, you are very insistent."

"What is one to do? Mademoiselle specially ordered me to wake her. . . . Mademoiselle said that—"

"I know what I said. I'll see how I feel when I have had my chocolate. The coachman had better get a map and look out the way upon it."

She lay back on the pillow and regretted she had come to England. There was no reason why she should not have thrown over this engagement. It wouldn't have been the first. Owen had always told her that money ought never to tempt her to do anything she didn't like. He had persuaded her to accept this engagement, though he knew that she did not want to sing in London. How often before had she not refused, and with his approbation? But then his pleasure was involved in the refusal or the acceptance of the engagement. He did not mind her throwing over a valuable offer to sing if he wanted her to go yachting with him. Men were so selfish. She smiled, for she knew she was acting a little comedy with herself. "But, quite seriously, I am annoyed with Owen. The London engagement—no, of course, I could not go

on refusing to sing in London." She was annoyed with him because he had dissuaded her from doing what her instinct had told her was the right thing to do. She had wished to go to her father the moment she set foot in England, and beg his forgiveness. When they had arrived at Victoria, she had said that she would like to take the train to Dulwich. There happened to be one waiting. But they had had a rough crossing; she was very tired, and he had suggested she should postpone her visit to the next day. But next day her humour was different. She knew quite well that the sooner she went the easier it would be for her to press her father to forgive her, to entrap him into reconciliation. She had imagined that she could entrap her father into forgiving her by throwing herself into his arms, or with the mere phrase, "Father, I've come to ask you how I sing," But she had not been able to overcome her aversion to going to Dulwich, and every time the question presented itself a look of distress came into her face. "If I only knew what he would say when he sees me. If the first word were over—the 'entrance,'" she added, with a smile.

It was hopeless to argue with her, so Owen said that if she did not go before the end of the week it would be better to postpone her visit until after her first appearance.

"But supposing I fail. I never cared for Margaret. Besides, it was mother's great part. He'll think me as bad an artist as I have been a bad daughter. Owen, dear, have patience with me, I know I'm very weak, but I dread a face of stone."

Neither spoke for a long while. Then she said, "If I had only gone to him last year. You remember he

had written me a nice letter, but instead I went away yachting; you wanted to go to Greece."

"Evelyn, don't lay the blame on me; you wanted to go too. . . . I hope that when you do see your father you will say that it was not all my fault."

"That what was not your fault, dear?"

"Well—I mean that it was not all my fault that we went away together. You know that I always liked your father. I was interested in his ideas; I do not want him to think too badly of me. You will say something in my favour. After all, I haven't treated you badly. If I didn't marry you, it was because—"

"Dearest Owen, you've been very good to me."

He felt that to ask her again to go to see her father would only distress her. He said instead,—

"I hear a great deal about your father's choir. It appears to be quite the fashion to hear high mass at St. Joseph's."

"Father always said that Palestrina would draw all London, if properly given. Last Sunday he gave a mass by Vittoria; I longed to go. He'll never forgive me for not going to hear his choir. It is strange that we both should have succeeded—he with Palestrina, I with Wagner."

"Yes, it is strange. . . . But you promise me that you'll go and see him as soon as you've sung Margaret—the following day."

"Yes, dear, I promise you I'll do that."

"You'll send him a box for the first night?"

"He wouldn't sit in a box. If he went at all, it would be in some obscure place where he would not be seen."

"You had better send him a box, a stall and a dress circle, then he can take his choice . . . But perhaps you had better not send. His presence among the audience would only make you nervous."

"No, on the contrary, his presence would make me sing."

For whatever reason she had certainly sung and acted with exceptional force and genius, and Margaret was at once lifted out of the obscurity into which it was slipping and took rank with her Elizabeth and her Elsa. As they drove home together in the brougham after the performance, Owen assured her that she had infused a life and meaning into the part, and that henceforth her reading would have to be "adopted."

"I wonder if father was there? He was not in the box. Did you look in the stalls?"

"Yes, but he was not there. You'll go and see him to-morrow."

"No, not to-morrow, dear."

"Why, not to-morrow?"

"Because I want him to see the papers. He may not have been in the theatre; on Thursday night is Lady Ascott's ball; then on Friday—I'll go and see father on Friday. I'll try to summon courage. But there is a rehearsal of 'Tannhäuser' on Friday."

And so that she might not be too tired on Friday morning, Owen insisted on her leaving the ball-room at two o'clock, and their last words, as he left her on her doorstep, were that she would go to Dulwich before she went to rehearsal. But in the warmth of her bed, not occupied long enough to restore to the body the strength of which a ball-room had robbed it, her resolution waned,

and her brain, weak from insufficient sleep, shrank from the prospect of a long drive and a face of stone at the end of it. She sat moodily sipping her chocolate and *brioche*.

"You were at the opera last night, Merat. Was Mademoiselle Helbrun a success?"

"No mademoiselle, I'm afraid not."

"Ah!" Evelyn put down her cup and looked at her maid. "I'm sorry, but I thought she wouldn't succeed in London. She was coldly received, was she?"

"Yes, mademoiselle."

"I'm sorry, for she's a true artist."

"She has not the passion of mademoiselle."

A little look of pleasure lit up Evelyn's face.

"She is a charming singer. I can't think how she could have failed. Did you hear any reason given?"

"Yes, mademoiselle, I met Mr. Ulick Dean."

"What did he say? He'd know."

"He said that Mademoiselle Helbrun's was the true reading of the part. But 'Carmen' had lately been turned into a *femme de la halle*, and, of course, since the public had tasted realism it wanted more. I thought Mademoiselle Helbrun rather cold. But then I'm one of the public. Mademoiselle has not yet told me what I am to tell the coachman."

"You do not listen to me, Merat," Evelyn answered in a sudden access of ill humour. "Instead of accepting the answer I choose to give, you stop there in the intention of obtaining the answer which seems to you the most suitable. I told you to tell the coachman that he was to get a map and acquaint himself with the way to Dulwich."

And to bring the interview to a close, she told Merat to take away the chocolate tray, and took up one of the scores which lay on a small table by the bedside— —“Tannhäuser” and “Tristan and Isolde.” It would bore her to look at Elizabeth again; she knew it all. She chose Tristan instead, and began reading the second act at the place where Isolde, ignoring Brangäne’s advice, signals to Tristan with the handkerchief. She glanced down the lines, hearing the motive on the ’cellos, then, in precipitated rhythm, taken up by the violins. When the emotion has reached breaking point, Tristan rushes into Isolde’s arms, and the frantic happiness of the lovers is depicted in short, hurried phrases. The score slipped from her hands and her thoughts ran in reminiscence of a similar scene which she had endured in Venice nearly four years ago. She had not seen Owen for two months, and was expecting him every hour. The old walls of the palace, the black and watchful pictures, the watery odours and echoes from the canal had frightened and exhausted her. The persecution of passion in her brain and the fever of passion afloat in her blood waxed, and the minutes became each a separate torture. There was only one lamp. She had watched it, fearing every moment lest it should go out. . . . She had cast a frightened glance round the room, and it was the spectre of life that her exalted imagination saw, and her natural eyes a strange ascension of the moon. The moon rose out of a sullen sky, and its reflection trailed down the lagoon. Hardly any stars were visible, and everything was extraordinarily still. The houses leaned heavily forward and Evelyn feared she might go mad, and it was through this phantom world of lagoon and autumn

mist that a gondola glided. This time her heart told her with a loud cry that he had come, and she had stood in the shadow-room waiting for him, her brain on fire. The emotion of that night came to her at will, and lying in her warm bed she considered the meeting of Tristan and Isolde in the garden, and the duet on the bank of sultry flowers. Like Tristan and Isolde, she and Owen had struggled to find expression for their emotion, but, not having music, it had lain cramped up in their hearts, and their kisses were vain to express it. She found it in these swift irregularities of rhythm, replying to every change of motion, and every change of key cried back some pang of the heart.

This scene in the second act was certainly one of the most difficult—at least to her—and the one in which she most despaired of excelling. It suddenly occurred to her that she might study it with Ulick Dean. She had met him at rehearsal, and had been much interested in him. He had sent her six melodies—strange, old-world rhythms, recalling in a way the Gregorian she used to read in childhood in the missals, yet modulated as unintermittently as Wagner; the same chromatic scale and yet a haunting of the antique rhythm in the melody. Ulick knew her father; he had said, “Mr. Innes is my greatest friend.” He loved her father, she could see that, but she had not dared to question him. Talking to Owen was like the sunshine—the earth and only the earth was visible—whereas talking to Ulick was like the twilight through which the stars were shining. Dreams were to him the true realities; externals he accepted as other people accepted dreams—with diffidence. Evelyn laughed, much amused by herself and Ulick, and



she laughed as she thought of his fixed and averted look as he related the tales of bards and warriors. Every now and then his dark eyes would light up with gleams of sunny humour; he probably believed that the legends contained certain eternal truths, and these he was shaping into operas. He was the most interesting young man she had met this long while.

He had been about to tell her why he had recanted his Wagnerian faith when they had been interrupted by Owen. . . . She could conceive nothing more interesting than the recantation by a man of genius of the ideas that had first inspired him. His opera had been accepted, and would be produced if she undertook the principal part. Why should she not? They could both help each other. Truly, he was the person with whom she could study *Isolde*, and she imagined the flood of new light he would throw upon it. Her head drowsed on the pillow, and she dreamed the wonderful things he would tell her. But as she drowsed she thought of the article he had written about her Margaret, and it was the desire to read it again that awoke her. Stretching out her hand, she took it from the table at her bedside and began reading. He liked the dull green dress she wore in the first act; and the long braids of golden hair which he admired were her own. He had mentioned them and the dark velvet cape, which he could not remember whether she wore or carried. As a matter of fact, she carried it on her arm. His forgetfulness on this point seemed to her charming, and she smiled with pleasure. He said that she made good use of the cape in the next act, and she was glad that he had perceived that.

Like every other Margaret, her prayer-book was in her hand when she first met Faust; but she dropped it as she saw him, and while she shyly and sweetly sang that she was neither a lady nor a beauty, she stooped and with some embarrassment picked up the book. She passed on, and did not stop to utter a mechanical cry when she saw Mephistopheles, and then run away. She hesitated a moment; Mephistopheles was not in sight, but Faust was just behind her, and over the face of Margaret flashed the thought, "What a charming—what a lovely young man! I think I'll stop a little longer, and possibly he'll say something more. But no—after all—perhaps I'd better not," and, with a little sigh of regret, she turned and went, at first quietly and then more quickly, as though fearful of being tempted to change her mind.

In the garden scene, she sang the first bars of the music absent-mindedly, dusting and folding her little cape, stopping when it was only half folded to stand forgetful a moment, her eyes far off, gazing back into the preceding act. Awaking with a little start, she went to her spinning-wheel, with her back to the audience, arranged the spindle and the flax. Then stopping in her work and standing in thought, she half hummed, half sang the song "*Le Roi de Thulé.*" Not till she had nearly finished did she sit down and spin, and then only for a moment, as though too restless and disturbed for work that afternoon.

Evelyn was glad that Ulick had remarked that the jewels were not "the ropes of pearls we are accustomed to, but strange, mediæval jewels, long, heavy earrings and girdles and broad bracelets." Owen had given her

these. She remembered how she had put them on, just as Ulick said, with the joy of a child and the musical glee of a bird. "She laughed out the jewel song," he said, "with real laughter, returning lightly across the stage;" and he said that they had "wondered what was this lovely music which they had never heard before!" And when she placed the jewels back, she did so lingeringly, regretfully, slowly, one by one, even forgetting the earrings, perhaps purposely, till just before she entered the house.

"In the duet with Faust," he said, "we were drawn by that lovely voice as in a silken net, and life had for us but one meaning—the rapture of love."

"Has it got any other meaning?" Evelyn paused a moment to think. She was afraid that it had long ceased to have any other meaning for her. But love did not seem to play a large part in Ulick's life. Yet that last sentence—to write like that he must feel like that. She wondered, and then continued reading his article.

She was glad that he had noticed that when she fainted at the sight of Mephistopheles, she slowly revived as the curtain was falling and pointed to the place where he had been, seeing him again in her over-wrought brain. This she did think was a good idea, and, as he said, "seemed to accomplish something."

He thought her idea for her entrance in the following act exceedingly well imagined, for, instead of coming on neatly dressed and smiling like the other Margarets, she came down the steps of the church with her dress and hair disordered, in the arms of two women, walking with difficulty, only half recovered from her fainting fit. "It is by ideas like this," he said, "that the singer car-

ried forward the story, and made it seem like a real scene that was happening before our eyes. And after her brother had cursed Margaret, when he falls back dead, Miss Innes retreats, getting away from the body, half mad, half afraid. She did not rush immediately to him, as has been the operatic custom, kneel down, and, with one arm leaning heavily on Valentine's stomach, look up in the flies. Miss Innes, after backing far away from him, slowly returned, as if impelled to do so against her will, and, standing over the body, looked at it with curiosity, repulsion, terror; and then she burst into a whispered laugh, which communicated a feeling of real horror to the audience.

"In the last act, madness was tangled in her hair, and in her wide-open eyes were read the workings of her insane brain, and her every movement expressed the pathos of madness; her lovely voice told its sad tale without losing any of its sweetness and beauty. The pathos of the little souvenir phrases was almost unbearable, and the tragic power of the finish was extraordinary in a voice of such rare distinction and fluid utterance. Her singing and acting went hand in hand, twin sisters, equal and indivisible, and when the great moment in the trio came, she stepped forward and with an inspired intensity lifted her quivering hands above her head in a sort of mad ecstasy, and sang out the note clear and true, yet throbbing with emotion."

The paper slid from Evelyn's hand. She could see from Ulick's description of her acting that she had acted very well; if she had not, he could not have written like that. But her acting only seemed extraordinary when she read about it. It was all so natural to her. She simply

went on the stage, and once she was on the stage she could not do otherwise. She could not tell why she did things. Her acting was so much a part of herself that she could not think of it as an art at all; it was merely a medium through which she was able to re-live past phases of her life, or to exhibit her present life in a more intense and concentrated form. The dropping of the book was quite true; she had dropped a piece of music when she first saw Owen, and the omission of the scream was natural to her. She felt sure that she would not have seen Mephistopheles just then; she would have been too busy thinking of the young man. But she thought that she might take a little credit for her entrance in the third act. Somehow her predecessors had not seen that it was absurd to come smiling and tripping out of church, where she had seen Mephistopheles. She read the lines describing her power to depict madness. But even in the mad scenes she was not conscious of having invented anything. She had had sensations of madness—she supposed everyone had—and she threw herself into those sensations, intensifying them, giving them more prominence on the stage than they had had in her own personal life.

Many had thought her a greater actress than a singer; and she had been advised to dispense with her voice and challenge a verdict on her speaking voice in one of Shakespeare's plays. Owen would have liked her to risk the adventure, but she dared not. It would seem a wanton insult to her voice. She had imagined that it might leave her as an offended spirit might leave its local habitation. Her Margaret had been accepted in Italy, so she must sing it as well as she acted it. But

when she had asked the Marquis d'Albazzi if she sang it as well as her mother, he had said, "Mademoiselle, the singers of my day were as exquisite flutes, and the singers of your day give emotions that no flute could give me," and when she had told him that she was going to be so bold as to attempt Norma, he had raised his eyebrows a little and said, "Mademoiselle will sing it according to the fashion of to-day; we cannot compare the present with the past." Ah! *Ce vieux marquis était très fin*. And her father would think the same; never would he admit that she could sing like her mother. But Ulick had said—and no doubt he had already read Ulick's article—that she had rescued the opera from the grave into which it was gliding. None of them liked it for itself. Her father spoke indulgently about it because her mother had sung it. Ulick praised it because he was tired of hearing Wagner praised, and she liked it because her first success had been made in it.

These morning hours, how delicious they were! to roll over in one's silk nightgown, to feel it tighten round one's limbs and to think how easily success had come. Madame Savelli had taught her eight operas in ten months, and she had sung Margaret in Brussels—a very thin performance, no doubt, but she had always been a success. Ulick would not have thought much of her first Margaret. Almost all the points he admired she had since added. She had learnt the art of being herself on the stage. That was all she had learnt, and she very much doubted if there was anything else to learn. If Nature gives one a personality worth exhibiting, the art of acting is to get as much of one's personality into the part as possible. That was the A B C and the X Y Z

of the art of acting. She had always found that when she was acting herself, she was acting something that had not been acted before. She did not compare her Margaret with her Elizabeth. With Margaret she was back in the schoolroom. Still she thought that Ulick was right; she had got a new thrill out of it. Her Margaret was unpublished, but her Elizabeth was three times as real. There was no comparison; not even in *Isolde* could she be more true to herself. Her Elizabeth was a side of her life that now only existed on the stage. *Brunhilde* was her best part, for into it she poured all her joy of life, all her love of the blue sky with great white clouds floating, all her enthusiasm for life and for the hero who came to awaken her to life and to love. In *Brunhilde* and *Elizabeth* all the humanity she represented—and she thought she was a fairly human person—was on the stage. But *Elsa*? That was the one part she was dissatisfied with. There were people who liked her *Elsa*. Oh, her *Elsa* had been greatly praised. Perhaps she was mistaken, but at the bottom of her heart she could not but feel that her *Elsa* was a failure. The truth was that she had never understood the story. It began beautifully, the beginning was wonderful—the maiden whom everyone was persecuting, who would be put to death if some knight did not come to her aid. She could sing the dream—that she understood. Then the silver-clad knight who comes from afar, down the winding river, past thorp and town, to release her from those who were plotting against her. But afterwards? This knight who wanted to marry her, and who would not tell his name. What did it mean? And the celebrated duet in the nuptial chamber—what did it mean?

It was beautiful music—but what did it mean? Could anyone tell her? She had often asked, but no one had ever been able to tell her.

She knew very well the meaning of the duet, when Siegfried adventures through the fire-surrounded mountain and wakes Brunhilde with a kiss. That duet meant the joy of life, the rapture of awakening to the adventure of life, the delight of the swirling current of ephemeral things. And the duet that she was going to sing; she knew what that meant too. It meant the desire to possess. Desire finding a barrier to complete possession in the flesh would break off the fleshly lease, and enter the great darkness where alone was union and rest.

But she could not discover the idea in the “Lohengrin” duet? Senta she understood, and she thought she understood Kundry. She had not yet begun to study the part. But Elsa? Suddenly the thought that, if she was going to Dulwich, she must get up, struck her like a spur, and she sprang out of bed, and laying her finger on the electric bell she kept the button pressed till Merat arrived breathless.

“Merat, I shall get up at once; prepare my bath, and tell the coachman I shall be ready to start in twenty minutes.”

“Twenty minutes? Mademoiselle is joking.”

“No, I am not . . . in twenty minutes—half-an-hour at the most.”

“It would be impossible for me to dress you in less than three-quarters of an hour.”

“I shall be dressed in half-an-hour. Go and tell the coachman at once; I shall have had my bath when you return.”



Her dressing was accomplished amid curt phrases. "It doesn't matter, that will do. . . . I can't afford to waste time. . . . Come, Merat, try to get on with my hair."

And while Merat buttoned her boots she buttoned her gloves. She wore a grey, tailor-made dress and a blue veil tied round a black hat with ostrich feathers. Escaping from her maid's hands, she ran downstairs. But the dining-room door opened, and Lady Duckle intervened.

"My dear girl, you really cannot go out before you have had something to eat."

"I cannot stay; I'll get something at the theatre."

"Do eat a cutlet, it will not take a moment . . . a mouthful of omelette. Think of your voice."

There were engravings after Morland on the walls, and the silver on the breakfast-table was Queen Anne—the little round tea urn Owen and Evelyn had picked up the other day in a suburban shop; the horses, whose glittering red hides could be seen through the window, had been bought last Saturday at Tattersall's. Evelyn went to the window to admire them, and Lady Duckle's thoughts turned to the coachman.

"He sent in just now to ask for a map of London. It appears he doesn't know the way, yet, when I took up his references, I was assured that he knew London perfectly."

"Dulwich is very little known; it is at least five miles from here."

"Oh, Dulwich! . . . you're going there?"

"Yes, I ought to have gone the day after we arrived in London. . . . I wanted to; I've been thinking of it all

the time, and the longer I put it off the more difficult it will become."

"That is true."

"I thought I would drive there to-day before I went to rehearsal."

"Why choose a day on which you have a rehearsal?"

"Only because I've put it off so often. Something always happens to prevent me. I must see my father."

"Have you written to him?"

"No, but I sent him a paper containing an account of the first night. I thought he might have written to me about it, or he might have come to see me. He must know that I am dying to see him."

"I think it would be better for you to go to see him in the first instance."

Lady Duckle meant Evelyn to understand that it would not be well to risk anything that might bring about a meeting between Sir Owen and Mr. Innes. But she did not dare to be more explicit. Owen had forbidden any discussion of his relations with Evelyn.

"Of course it would be nice for you to see your father. But you should, I think, go to him; surely that is the proper course."

"We've written to each other from time to time, but not lately—not since we went to Greece. . . . I've neglected my correspondence."

Tears rose to Evelyn's eyes, and Lady Duckle was sorely tempted to lead her into confidences. But Owen's counsels prevailed; she dissembled, saying that she knew how Evelyn loved her father, and how nice it would be for her to see him again after such a long absence.

"I daresay he'll forgive me, but there'll be re-

proaches. I don't think there's anyone who hates a scene more than I do."

"I haven't lived with you five years without having found out that. But in avoiding a disagreeable scene we are often preparing one more disagreeable."

"That is true. . . . I think I'll go to Dulwich."

"Shall you have time? . . . You're not in the first act."

"Dulwich is not six miles from here. We can drive there easily in three-quarters of an hour. And three-quarters of an hour to get back. They won't begin to rehearse the second act before one. It is a little after ten now."

"Then good-bye."

Lady Duckle followed her to the front door and stood for a moment to admire the beauty of the morning. The chestnut horses pawed the ground restlessly, excited by the scent of the lilac which a wilful little breeze carried up from Hamilton Place. Every passing hansom was full of flowered silks, and the pale laburnum gold hung in loose tassels out of quaint garden inlets. The verandahed balconies seemed to hang lower than ever, and they were all hung and burdened with flowers. And of all these eighteenth century houses, Evelyn's was the cosiest, and the elder of the two men, who, from the opposite pavement, stood watching the prima donna stroking the quivering nostrils of her almost thorough-bred chestnuts with her white-gloved hand, could easily imagine her in her pretty drawing-room standing beside a cabinet filled with Worcester and old Battersea china, for he knew Owen's taste and was certain the Louis XVI. marble clock would be well chosen, and he would have

bet five-and-twenty pounds that there were some Watteau and Gainsborough drawings on the walls.

"Owen is doing the thing well. Those horses must have cost four hundred. I know how much the Boucher drawing cost."

"How do you know there is a Boucher drawing?"

"Because we bid against each other for it at Christie's. A woman lying on her stomach, drawn very freely, very simply—quite a large drawing—just the thing for such a room as hers is, amid chintz and eighteenth century inlaid or painted tables."

"I wonder where she is going. Perhaps to see him."

"At ten o'clock in the morning! More likely that she will call at her dressmaker's on her way to rehearsal. She is to sing Elizabeth to-morrow night." And while discussing her singing, the elder man asked himself if he had ever had a mistress that would compare with her. "She isn't by any means a beautiful woman," he said, "but she's the sort of woman that if one did catch on to it would be for a long while."

The young man pitied Evelyn's misfortune of so elderly an admirer as Owen. It seemed to him impossible that she could like a man who must be over forty, and the thought saddened him that he might never possess so desirable a mistress.

"I wonder if she's faithful to him?"

"Faithful to him, after six years of *liaison!*"

"But, my dear Frank, we know you don't believe that any woman is straight. How do you know that he is her lover? Very often—"

"My dear Cyril, because you meet her at a ball at Lady Ascott's, and because she has lived with that Lady

Duckle—an old thing who used to present the daughters of ironmongers at Court for a consideration—above all, because you want her yourself, you are ready to believe anything. I never did meet anyone who could deceive himself with the same ease. Besides, I know all about her. It's quite an extraordinary story."

"How did he pick her up?"

"I'll tell you presently. She's got into her carriage; we shall be able to see if she rouges as she passes."

Evelyn had noticed the men as she stood trying to explain as much of the way as she could to her somewhat obtuse coachman. Her bow was gracious as the chestnuts swept the light carriage by them; the young man pleased her fancy for the moment, and she tried to recall the few words they had exchanged as she left the ball. The elder man was a friend of Owen's. But his face was suddenly blotted from her mind. For if her father were to refuse to see her, if he were to cast her off for good and all, what would she do? Her life would be unendurable; she would go mad, mad as Margaret. But the picture did not frighten her, she knew it was fictitious; and looking into her soul for the truth, she saw the trees in the Green Park and the chimney-pots of Walsingham House, and she realised that the nearest future is enveloped in obscurity. She had always dreaded the journey to London; she had been warned against London, and ever since she had consented to come she had been ill at ease and nervous—of what she did not know—of someone behind her, of someone lurking round her. She argued that she would not have had those feelings if there was not a reason. When she had them, something always hap-

pened to her, and nothing could convince her that London was not the turning-point in her fortune. The carriage seemed to be going very fast; they were already in Victoria Street; she cried to the coachman not to drive so fast, he answered that he must drive at that pace if he was to get there by eleven. . . . Surely her father would not refuse to see her. He could not, he would not take her by the shoulders and turn her out of the house—the house she had known all her life. Oh, good heavens! if he did, what would happen afterwards? She could not go back to Owen and sing operas at Covent Garden, and her soul wailed like a child and a deadly terror of her father came upon her. It might be her destiny never to speak to him again! That fate had been the fate of other women. Why should it not be hers? He might not send for her when he was dying, and if she were dying he might not come to her; and after death, would she see him? Would they then be reconciled? If she did not see her father in this world, she would never see him, for she had promised Owen to believe in oblivion, and she thought she did believe in nothing; but she felt now that she must say her prayers, she must pray that her father might forgive her. It might be absurd, but she felt that a prayer would ease her mind. It was dreadfully hypocritical to pray to a God one didn't believe in. There was no sense in it, nor was there much sense in much else one did. . . . She had promised Owen not to pray, and it was a sort of blasphemy to say prayers and lead a life of sin. She did not like to break her promise to Owen. She must make up her mind. . . . Her father might be at St. Joseph's! and it was with a

sense of refreshing delight that she called the coachman and gave the order. The chestnuts were prancing like greyhounds amid heavy drays and clumsy, bear-like horses; the coachman was trying to hold them in and to understand the policeman, who shouted the way to him from the edge of the pavement.

### XIII.

BUT she ought not to go to St. Joseph's. She had promised Owen to avoid churches, priests—all that reminded her of religion. He had begged that until she was firm in her agnosticism she should not expose herself to influences which could but result in mental distress, and without any practical issue unless to separate them. She had escaped once; next time he might find it more difficult to win her back. How kind he was. He had not said a word about his own suffering.

It had happened nearly three years ago in Florence, and an accident had brought it all about. One afternoon she was walking in the streets; she could still see the deep cornices showing distinct against the sky; she was admiring them when suddenly a church appeared; she could not tell how it was, but she had been propelled to enter. . . . A feeling which had arisen out of her heart, a sort of yearning—that was it. The church was almost empty; how restful it had seemed that afternoon, the rough plastered walls and the two figures of the nuns absorbed in prayer. Her heart had begun to ache, and her daily life with its riches and glories had seemed to concern her no longer. It was

as if the light had changed, and she had become suddenly aware of her real self. A tall cross stood oddly placed between the arches; she had not seen it at first, but as her eyes rested upon it she had been drawn into wistful communion with her dying Redeemer. And all that had seemed false suddenly became true, and she had left the church overcome with remorse. That night her door was closed to Owen; she had pleaded indisposition, unable for some shame to speak the truth. On the next day and the day after the desire of forgiveness had sent her to the church and then to the priest, but the priest had refused her absolution till she separated from her lover. She had felt that she must obey. She had written a note—she could not think of it now—so cruel did it seem, yet at the time it had seemed quite natural. It was not until the next day, and the day after was worse still, that she began to plumb the depths of her own unhappiness; every day it seemed to grow deeper. She could not keep him out of her mind. She used to sit and try to do needlework in the hotel sitting-room. But how often had she had to put it down and to walk to the window to hide her tears? As the time drew near for her to go to the theatre, she had to vow not to cry again till she got home. He was always in his box—once she had nearly broken down, and, pitying her, he came no more. But not to see him at all was worse than the pain of seeing him. That empty box! And all through the night she thought of him in his hotel, only a street or two distant. She could not go through it again, nor could she think what would have happened if they had not met. Something had prompted her to go out one afternoon; she



was weak with weeping and sick with love, and, feeling that there are burdens beyond our strength, she had walked with her eyes steadily fixed before her . . . and somehow she was not surprised when she saw him coming towards her. He joined her quite naturally, as if by appointment, and they had walked on, instinctively finding their way out of the crowd. They had walked on and on, now and then exchanging remarks, waiting for a full explanation, wondering what form it would take. Cypresses and campanili defined themselves in the landscape as the evening advanced. Further on, the country flattened out; there were urban gardens and dusty little vineyards. They had sat on a bench; above them was a statue of the Virgin; she remembered noticing it; it reminded her of her scapular, but nothing had mattered to her then but Owen. He said,—

“Well, Evelyn, when is all this nonsense going to cease?”

“I don’t know, Owen; I’m very unhappy.”

The sense of reconciliation which overtook her was too delicious to be resisted, and she remembered how all the way home she had longed for the moment when she would throw herself into his arms. He had not reproved her nor reproached her; he had merely forgiven her the pain she had caused him. There were sounds of children’s voices in the air and a glow of light upon the roofs. Their talk had been gentle and philosophic; she had listened eagerly, and had promised to shun influences which made her uselessly unhappy. And he had promised her that in time to come she would surely succeed in freeing herself from the tentacles of this church, and that the day would come when she would

watch the Mass as she would some childish sport. "Though," he added, smiling, "it is doubtful if anyone can see his own rocking-horse without experiencing a desire to mount it." Nearly three years had passed since that time in Florence, and she was now going to put the strength of her agnosticism to the test.

"They have not built a new entrance," she remarked to herself, as the coachman reined up the chestnuts before the meagre steps. "But alterations are being made," she thought, catching sight of some scaffolding. As she stepped out of her carriage she remembered that her dress and horses could not fail to suggest Owen's money to her father. She paused, and then hoped he would remember that she was getting three hundred pounds a week, and could pay for her carriage and gowns herself. And, smiling at the idea of dressing herself in a humble frock suitable for reconciliation, she entered the church hurriedly. She did not care to meet him in open daylight, in the presence of her servants. The church would be a better place. He could not say much to her in church, and she thought she would like to meet him suddenly face to face; then there would be no time for explanations, and he could not refuse to speak to her. Looking round she saw that Mass was in progress at one of the side altars. The acolyte had just changed the book from the left to the right, and the congregation of about a dozen had risen for the reading of the Gospel. She knew that her father was not among them. She must have known all the while that he was not in church. If he were at St. Joseph's, he would be in the practising room. She might go round and ask for him . . . and run the risk

of meeting one of the priests! They were men of tact, and would refrain from unpleasant allusions. But they knew she was on the stage, that she had not been back since she had left home; they could not but suspect; however they might speak, she could not avoid reading meanings, which very likely were not intended, into their words. . . . And she would see the practising room full of faces, and her father, already angry at the interruption, opening the door to her. It would be worse than meeting him in the street. No, she would not seek him in the practising room—then where—Dulwich? Perhaps, but not to-day. She would wait in the church and see if the Elevation compelled her to bow her head.

And in this intention she took a seat in full view of the altar where the priest was saying Mass. Every shape and every colour of this church, its slightest characteristics, brought back an impression of long ago; the very wording of her childish thoughts was suddenly remembered; and she felt, whether she believed or disbelieved, that it was pleasant to kneel where she knelt when she was a little girl. It was touching to see the poor folk pray. The poor Irish and Italians—especially the Irish—how simple they were; it was all real to them, however false it may have become to her. Her eyes wandered among the little congregation; only one she recognised—the strangely thin and crooked lady who, as far back as she could remember, used to walk up the aisle, her hands crossed in front of her like a wooden doll's. She had not altered at all; she wore the same battered black bonnet. This lonely lady had always been a subject of curiosity to Evelyn. She remembered

how she used to invent houses for her to live in and suitable friends and evenings at home. The day that Owen came to St. Joseph's before he went away on his yacht to the Mediterranean, he had put his hat on this lady's chair, and she had had to ask him to remove it. How frightened she had looked, and he not too well pleased at having to sit beside her. That was six years ago, and Evelyn thought how much had happened to her in that time—a great deal to her and very little to that poor woman in the black bonnet. She must have some little income on which she lived in a room with wax fruit in the window. Every morning and evening she was at St. Joseph's. The church was her one distraction; it was her theatre, the theatre certainly of all her thoughts.

But at that moment the new choir-loft caught Evelyn's eye, and she imagined the melodious choirs answering each other from opposite sides. No doubt her father had insisted on the addition, so that such antiphonal music as the Reproaches might be given. Some rich carpets had been laid down, some painting and cleaning had been done, and the fashionable names on the front seats reminded her of the Grand Circle at Covent Garden. Evidently the frequentation of St. Joseph's was much the same as the theatres. The congregation was attracted by the choirs, and, when these were silenced, the worship shrank into the mumbled prayers of a few Irish and Italians. Evelyn wondered if the poor lady could distinguish between her father's music and Father Gordon's. The only music she heard was the ceaseless music of her devout soul.

Was it not strange that the paper she had sent her

father containing an account of her success in the part of Margaret contained also an account of his choir? They had both succeeded. The old music had made St. Joseph's a fashionable church. So far she knew, and despite her strange terror of their first meeting, she longed to hear him tell her how he had overcome the opposition of Father Gordon.

The Gospel ended, the little congregation sat down, and Evelyn reflected how much more difficult belief was to her than to the slightly-deformed woman in front of her. The doctrine that a merciful God has prepared a place of eternal torment for his erring creatures is hard enough to credit. She didn't think she could ever believe that again; or that God had sent his Son on earth to expiate on the cross the sins which he and his Father in conjunction with the Holy Ghost had fated them to commit; or that bread and wine becomes, at the bidding of the priest, the creator of all the stars we see at midnight. True that she believed these doctrines no longer, but, unfortunately, this advancement brought her no nearer to the solution of the question directly affecting her life. Owen encouraged her to persevere in her agnosticism. "Old instincts," he said, "are not conquered at once. You must be patient. The Scotch were converted about three or four hundred years after Christ. Christianity is therefore fourteen hundred years old, whereas the seed of agnosticism has been sown but a few years; give it time to catch root." She had laughed, his wit amused her, but our feelings are—well, they are ours, and we cannot separate ourselves from them. They are certain, though everything else is uncertain, and when she looked into her mind (she tried

to avoid doing so as much as possible, but she could not always help herself) something told her that the present was but a passing stage. Often it seemed to her that she was like one out on a picnic—she was amused—she would be sorry when it ended; but she could not feel that it was to last. Other women were at home in their lives; she was not in hers. We all have a life that it is more natural for us to live than any other; we all have a mission of some sort to accomplish, and the happiest are those whose lives correspond to their convictions. Even Owen's love did not quite compensate her for the lack of agreement between her outer and inner life.

All this they had argued a hundred times, but their points of view were so different. Once, however, she thought she had made him understand. She had said, "If you don't understand religion, you understand art. Well, then, imagine a man who wants to paint pictures; give him a palace to live in; place every pleasure at his call, imposing only one condition—that he is not to paint. His appetites may detain him in the palace for awhile, but sooner or later he will cry out, 'All these pleasures are nothing to me; what I want is to paint pictures.'" She could see that the parable had convinced him, or nearly. He had said he was afraid she was hopeless. But a moment after, drawing her toward him with quiet, masterful arm, and speaking with that hard voice that could become so soft, it had seemed as if heaven suddenly melted away, and his kisses were worth every sacrifice.

That was the worst of it. She was neither one thing nor the other. She desired two lives diametrically op-

posed to each other, consequently she would never be happy. But she was happy. She had everything; she could think of nothing that she wanted that she had not got: it was really too ridiculous for her to pretend to herself that she was not happy. So long as she had believed in religion she had not been happy, but now she believed no longer—she was happy. It was strange, however, that a church always brought the old feeling back again, and her thoughts paused, and in a silent awe of soul she asked herself if, at the bottom of her soul, she still disbelieved in God. But it was so silly to believe the story of the Virgin—think of it. . . . As Owen said, in no mythology was there anything more ridiculous. Nevertheless, she did not convince herself that the dim, vague, unquiet sensation which rankled in her was not a still unextirpated germ of the original faith. She tried to think it was not a religious feeling but the result of the terrible interview still hanging over her, the dread that her father might not forgive her. She tried to look into her mind to discover the impulse which had compelled her to turn from her intention and come to this church. She remembered the uncontrollable desire to say a prayer: that she could have resisted, but the moment after she had remembered that perhaps it was too late to find her father at home. But had she really hoped to find him at St. Joseph's, or had she used the pretext to deceive herself? She could not tell. But if religion was not true, if she did not believe, how was it that she had always thought it wrong to live with a man to whom she was not married? There was no use pretending, she never had quite got a haunting scruple on that point out of her mind.

There could be but two reasons, he had insisted, for the maintenance of the matrimonial idea—the preservation of the race, and the belief that cohabitation without matrimony is an offence against God. But the race is antecedent to matrimony, and if there be no resurrection, there can be no religion. . . . If there be no personal God who manages our affairs and summons to everlasting bliss or torment, the matter is not worth thinking about—at least not to a Catholic. Pious agnosticism is a bauble unworthy to tempt anyone who has been brought up a Catholic. A Catholic remains a Catholic, or else becomes a frank agnostic. Only weak-minded Protestants run to that slender shelter—morality without God. “But why are you like this?” he had said, fixing his eyes. . . . “I think I see. Your father comes of a long line of Scotch Protestants; he became a Catholic so that he might marry your mother. Your scruples must be a Protestant heredity. I wonder if it is so? In no other way can I account for the fact that although you no longer believe in a resurrection, you cling fast to the doctrine which declares it wrong for two people, both free, to live together, unless they register their cohabitation in the parish books. Our reason is our own. Our feelings we inherit. You are enslaved to your Scotch ancestors; you are a slave to the superstitions of your grandmother and your grand-aunts; you obey them.”

“But do we not inherit our reason just as much as we inherit our feelings?”

They had argued that point. She could not remember what his argument was, but she remembered that she had held her ground, that he had complimented her, not forgetting, however, to take the credit of the



improvement in her intellectual equipment to himself, which indeed was no more than just. She would have been nothing without him. How he had altered her! She had come to think and feel like him. She often caught herself saying exactly what he would say in certain circumstances, and having heard him say how odours affected him, she had tried to acquire a like sensibility. Unconsciously she had assimilated a great deal. That little trick of his, using his eyes a certain way, that knowing little glance of his had become habitual to her. She had met men who were more profound, never anyone whose mind was more alert, more amusing and sufficient for every occasion. She sentimentalised a moment, and then remembered further similarities. They now ate the same dishes, and no longer had need to consult each other before ordering dinner. In their first week in Paris she had learnt to look forward to chocolate in the morning before she got up, and this taste was endeared to her, for it reminded her of him. In the picture galleries she had always tried to pick out the pictures he would like. If they could not decide how a passage should be sung, or were in doubt regarding the attitude and gesture best fitted to carry on a dramatic action, she had noticed that, if they separated so that they might arrive at individual conclusions, they almost always happened upon the same. To each other they now affected not to know from whom a certain quaint notion had come—clearly it had been inspired by him, but which had first expressed it was not sure—that the three great type operas were “Tristan and Isolde,” the “Barber of Seville,” and “La Belle Hélène.” Nor were they sure which had first suggested

that in the last week of her stage career she should appear in all three parts. Evelyn Innes, as *La Belle Hélène*, would set musical London by the ears.

She had often wondered whether, by having absorbed so much of Owen's character, she had proved herself deficient in character. Owen maintained, on the contrary, that the sign of genius is the power of recognising and assimilating that which is necessary to the development of oneself. He mentioned Goethe's life, which he said was but the tale of a long assimilation of ideas. The narrow, barren soul is narrow and barren because it cannot acquire. We come into the world with nothing in our own right except the capacity for the acquisition of ideas. We cannot invent ideas; we can only gather some of those in circulation since the beginning of the world. We endow them with the colour and form of our time, and, if that colour and form be of supreme quality, the work is preserved as representative of a period in the history of civilisation; a name may or may not be attached to each specimen. Genius is merely the power of assimilation; only the fool imagines he invents. Owen would go still further. He maintained that if the circumstances of a man's life admitted the acquisition of only one set of ideas, his work was thin; but if, on the contrary, circumstances threw him in the way of a new set of ideas, a set of ideas different from the first set, yet sufficiently near for the same brain to assimilate, then the work produced by that brain would be endowed with richer colour; or, in severer form, the idea was, he said, to a work of art what salt is to meat—it preserved works of art against the corrupting action of time.

How they had talked! how they had discussed things! They had talked about everything, and she remembered all he said, as she recalled the arguments he had used. The scene of this last conversation passed and repassed in vanishing gleams—Bopart on the Rhine. They had stopped there on their way to Bayreuth, where she was going to sing *Elsa*. The maidens and their gold, the fire-surrounding *Brunhilde*, the death of the hero, the end of the legends: these she knew, but of "*Parsifal*" she knew nothing—the story or the music. The time was propitious for him to tell it. The flame of the candle burnt in the still midnight, and she had listened with bated breath. She could see Owen leaning forward, telling the story, and she could even see her own listening face as he related how the poor fool rises through sanctification of faith and repudiation of doubt, how he heals the sick king with the sacred spear and becomes himself the high priest of the Grail. It had seemed to Evelyn that she had been carried beyond the limits of earthly things. The thrill and shiver of the dead man's genius haunted the liquid ripple of the river; the moment was ecstatic; the deep, windless night was full of the haunting ripple of the Rhine. And she remembered how she had clasped her hands . . . her very words came back to her. . . .

"It is wonderful . . . and we are listening to the Rhine; we shall never forget this midnight."

At that moment the *Sanctus* bell rang, and she remembered why she had stayed in church. She wished to discover what remnant, tatter or shred of her early faith still clung about her. She wished to put her agnosticism to the test. She wondered if at the moment

of consecration she would be compelled to bow her head. The bell rang again. . . . She grew tremulous with expectation. She strove to refrain, but her head bowed a little, and her thoughts expanded into prayer; she was not sure that she actually prayed, for her thoughts did not divide into explicit words or phrases. There certainly followed a beautiful softening of her whole being, the bitterness of life extinguished; divine eyes seemed bent upon her, and she was in the midst of mercy, peace and love; and daring no longer to think she did not believe, she sat rapt till Mass was ended.

#### XIV.

STILL under the sweet influence of the church and the ceremony she got into her carriage. But the mystery engendered in her soul seemed to fade and die in the sunshine; she could almost perceive it going out like a gentle, evanescent mist on the surface of a pool; she remembered that she would very likely meet Ulick at rehearsal, and could find out from him how her father would be likely to receive her visit. Ulick seemed the solution of the difficulty—only he might tell her that her father did not wish to see her. She did not think he would say that, and the swing of her carriage and her thoughts went to the same rhythm until the carriage stopped before the stage door of Covent Garden Theatre.

As she ascended the stairs the swing door was pushed open. The pilgrims' song drifted through it, and she knew that they had begun the overture. She crossed a stage in indescribable disorder. Scene-shifters were calling to each other, and there was an incessant ham-

mering in the flies. "We might as well rehearse in a barn with the threshing-machine going all the while," Evelyn thought. She had to pass down a long passage to get to the stalls, and, finding herself in inky darkness, she grew nervous, though she knew well enough whither it led. At last she perceived a little light, and, following it for awhile, she happened to stumble into one of the boxes, and there she sat and indulged in angry comments on the negligence of English operatic management.

Through the grey twilight of the auditorium she could see heads and hands, and shapes of musical instruments. The conductor's grey hair was combed back over his high forehead. He swung a lean body to the right and left. Suddenly he sprang up in his seat, and, looking in the direction of certain instruments, he brought down his stick determinedly, and, having obtained the effect he desired, his beat swung leisurely for awhile. . . . "Cellos, crescendo," he cried. "Ah, *mon Dieu!* Ta-ra-la-la-la! Now, gentlemen, number twenty-five, please."

For a few bars the stick swung automatically, striking the harmonium as it descended. "Cellos, a sudden piano on the accent, and then no accent whatever. Ta-ra-ta-ta-ta!"

At the back of the stalls the poor Italian chorus had gathered like a herd, not daring to sit in seats, the hire of which for a few hours equalled their weekly wages. But the English girls, whose musical tastes had compelled them from their suburban homes, had no such scruples. Confident of the cleanliness of their skirts and hats, they sat in the best stalls, their scores on their

knees. One happened to look up as Evelyn entered. She whispered to her neighbours, and immediately after the row was discussing Bayreuth and Evelyn Innes.

Meanwhile, the pilgrims' song grew more strenuous, until at last the trombones proclaimed, in unconquerable tones, Tannhäuser's abjuration of sensual life, and at that moment the tall, spare figure of Mr. Hermann Goetze, the manager, appeared in the doorway leading to the stalls. He was with his apparitor and satellite, Mr. Wheeler, a foppish little man, who seemed pleased at being seen in confidential conversation with his great chief. Catching sight of Evelyn in the box just above his eyes, he smiled and bowed obsequiously. A sudden thought seemed to strike him, and Evelyn said to herself, "He's coming to talk with me about the Brangäne. I hope he has done what I told him, and engaged Helbrun for the part."

At the same moment it flashed across her mind that Mademoiselle Helbrun's unsuccessful appearance in "Carmen" might cause Mr. Hermann Goetze to propose someone else. She hoped that this was not so, for she could not consent to sing Isolde to anyone but Helbrun's Brangäne, and it was in this resolute, almost aggressive, frame of mind that she received the manager.

"How do you do, Mr. Hermann Goetze? Well, I hope you succeeded in inducing Mademoiselle Helbrun to play Brangäne?"

"I have not had a moment, Miss Innes. I have not seen Mademoiselle Helbrun since last night. You will be sorry to hear that her Carmen was not considered a success. . . . Do you think—"

“There is no finer artist than Mademoiselle Helbrun. If you do not engage her—”

Mr. Hermann Goetze took his handkerchief from his pocket, and, upon inquiry, she learnt that he was suffering from toothache. Mr. Wheeler advised different remedies, but Mr. Hermann Goetze did not believe in remedies. There was nothing for it but to have it out. Evelyn suggested her dentist, and Mr. Hermann Goetze apologised for this interruption in the conversation. He begged of her not to think of him, and they entered into the difficult question of salary. He told her that Mademoiselle Helbrun would ask eighty pounds a performance, and such a heavy salary added to the four hundred pounds a performance he was paying for the *Tristan and Isolde* would— But so intense was the pain from his tooth at this moment that he could not finish the sentence. A little alarmed, Evelyn waited until the spasm had ended, and when the manager's composure was somewhat restored, she spoke of the change and stress of emotion, often expressed in isolated notes and vehement declamation, and she reminded the poor man of Brangäne's long song in which she endeavours to appease Isolde. Mr. Hermann Goetze looked at her out of pain-stricken eyes, and said he was listening. She assured him that the melodious effect would be lost if Brangäne could not sing the long-drawn phrases in a single breath. But she stopped suddenly, perceiving that an æsthetic discussion was impossible with a man who was in violent pain. Mr. Wheeler proposed to go to the chemist for a remedy. Mr. Hermann Goetze shook his head; he had tried all remedies in vain; the dentist was the only resort, and he promised to go to

Evelyn's when the rehearsal was over, and he retired from the box, holding his handkerchief to his face. When he got on to the stage, Evelyn was glad to see that he was a little better, and was able to give some directions regarding the stage management. She was genuinely sorry for him, for she had had toothache herself. Nevertheless, it was unfortunate that they had not been able to settle about Mademoiselle Helbrun's engagement. She pondered how this might be effected; perhaps, after rehearsal, Mr. Hermann Goetze might be feeling better, or she might ask him to dinner. As she considered the question, her eyes wandered over the auditorium in quest of Ulick Dean.

She spied him sitting in the far corner, and wondered when he would look in her direction, and then remembering what he had said about the transmission of thought between sympathetic affinities, she sought to reach him with hers. She closed her eyes so that she might concentrate her will sufficiently for it to penetrate his brain. She sat tense with her desire, her hands clenched for more than a minute, but he did not answer to her will, and its tension relaxed in spite of herself. "He sits there listening to the music as if he had never heard a note of it before. Why does he not come to me?" As if in answer, Ulick got out of his stall and walked toward the entrance, seemingly in the intention of leaving the theatre. Evelyn felt that she must speak to him, and she was about to call to one of the chorus and ask him to tell Mr. Dean that she wanted to speak to him, but a vague inquietude seemed to awaken in him, and he seemed uncertain whether to go or stay, and he looked round the theatre as if seeking someone. He



looked several times in the direction of Evelyn's box without seeing her, and she was at last obliged to wave her hand. Then the dream upon his face vanished, and his eyes lit up, and his nod was the nod of one whose soul is full of interesting story.

He had one of those long Irish faces, all in a straight line, with flat, slightly hollow cheeks, and a long chin. It was clean-shaven, and a heavy lock of black hair was always falling over his eyes. It was his eyes that gave its sombre ecstatic character to his face. They were large, dark, deeply set, singularly shaped, and they seemed to smoulder like fires in caves, leaping and sinking out of the darkness. He was a tall, thin young man, and he wore a black jacket and a large, blue necktie, tied with the ends hanging loose over his coat. Evelyn received him effusively, stretching both hands to him and telling him she was so glad he had come. She said she was delighted with his melodies, and would sing them as soon as she got an occasion. But he did not seem as pleased as he should have done; and sitting, his eyes fixed on the floor—now and then he muttered a word of thanks. His silence embarrassed her, and she felt suddenly that the talk which she had been looking forward to would be a failure, and she almost wished him out of her box. Neither had spoken for some time, and, to break an awkward silence, she said that she had been that morning at St. Joseph's. He looked up; their eyes met unexpectedly, and she seemed to read an impertinence in his eyes; they seemed to say, "I wonder how you dared go there!" But his words contradicted the idea which she thought she had read in his eyes. He asked her at once eagerly and sympathetically, if

she had seen her father. No, he was not there, and, growing suddenly shy, she sought to change the conversation.

"You are not a Roman Catholic, I think. . . . I know you were born a Catholic, but from something you said the other day I was led to think that you did not believe."

"I cannot think what I could have said to give you such an idea. Most people reproach me for believing too much."

"The other day you spoke of the ancient gods Angus and Lir, and the great mother Dana, as of real gods."

"Of course I spoke of them as real gods; I am a Celt, and they are real gods to me."

Now his face had lighted up, and in clear, harmonious voice he was arguing that the gods of a nation cannot die to that nation until it be incorporated and lost in another nation.

"I don't see how you reconcile Angus and Lir with Christianity, that is all."

"But I don't try to reconcile them; they do not need reconciliation; all the gods are part of one faith."

"But what do you believe . . . seriously?"

"Everything except Atheism, and unthinking contentment. I believe in Christianity, but I am not so foolish as to limit myself to Christianity; I look upon Christianity as part of the truth, but not the whole truth. There is a continuous revelation: before Christ Buddha, before Buddha Krishna, who was crucified in mid-heaven, and the Gods of my race live too."

She longed to ask Ulick so many questions that she could not frame one, so far had the idea of a continuous

revelation carried her beyond the limits of her habitual thoughts; and while she was trying to think out his meaning in one direction, she lost a great deal of what he said subsequently, and her face wore an eager, puzzled and disappointed look. That she should have been the subject of this young man's thoughts, that she should have suggested his opera of *Grania*, and that he should have at last succeeded, by means of an old photograph, in imagining some sort of image of her, flattered her inmost vanity, and with still brightening eyes she hoped that he was not disappointed in her.

"When did you begin to write opera? You must come to see me. You will tell me about your opera, and we will go through the music."

"Will you let me play my music to you?"

"Yes, I shall be delighted."

At that moment she remarked that Ulick's teeth were almost the most beautiful she had ever seen, and that they shone like snow in his dark face.

"Some afternoon at the end of the week. We're friends—I feel that we are. You are father's friend; you were his friend when I was away. Tell me if he missed me very much. Tell me about him. I have been longing to ask you all the time. What is he doing? I have heard about his choir. He has got some wonderful treble voices."

"He is very busy now rehearsing the 'Missa Brevis.' It will be given next Sunday. It will be splendidly done. . . . You ought to come to hear it."

"I should like to, of course, but I am not certain that I shall be able to go to St. Joseph's next Sunday. How did you and father become acquainted?"

"Through an article I wrote about the music of St. Joseph's. Mr. Innes said that it was written by a musician, and he wrote to the paper."

"Asking you to come to see him?"

"Yes. Your father was the first friend I made in London."

"And that was some years ago?"

"About four years ago. I had come over from Ireland with a few pounds in my pocket, and a portmanteau full of music, which I soon found no one wanted."

"You had written music before you had met father?"

"Yes, I was organist at St. Patrick's in Dublin for nearly three years. There's no one like your father, Miss Innes."

"No one, is there?" she replied enthusiastically. "There's no one like him. I'm so glad you are friends. You see him nearly every day, and you show him all your music." Then after a pause, she said, "Tell me, did he miss me very much?"

"Yes, he missed you, of course. But he felt that you were not wholly to blame."

"And you took my place. I can see it all. It was father and son, instead of father and daughter. How well you must have got on together. What talks you must have had."

The silence was confidential, and though they both were thinking of Mr. Innes, they seemed to become intimately aware of each other.

"But may I venture to advise you?"

"Yes. What?"

"I'm sure you ought to go and see him, or at least write to him saying you'd like to see him."

"I know—I know—I must go. He'll forgive me; he must forgive me. But I wish it were over. I'm afraid you think me very cowardly. You will not say you have seen me. You promise me to say nothing."

Ulick gave her the required promise, and she asked him again to come to see her.

"I want you," she said, "to go through Isolde's music with me."

"Do you think I can tell you anything about the music you don't know already?"

"Yes, I think you can. You tell me things about myself that I did not know. I hardly knew that I acted as you describe in Margaret. I hope I did, for I seemed very good in your article. I read it over again this morning in bed. But tell me, did father come?"

"You must not press me to answer that question. My advice to you is to go and see your father. He will tell you what he thought of your singing if he came here. . . . The act is over," he said suddenly, and he seemed glad of the interruption. "I wonder what your Elizabeth will be like?"

"What do you think?"

"You're a clever woman; you will no doubt arrive at a very logical and clear conception of the part, but—"

"But we cannot act what is not in us. Is that what you were going to say?"

"Something like that."

"You think I shall arrive at a logical and clear conception. Is that the way you think I arrived at my Margaret? Did it look like that? I may play the part of Elizabeth badly, but I sha'n't play it as you think I

shall. This frock is against me. I've a mind to send you away."

## XV.

INSTEAD of rushing wildly from side to side according to custom, she advanced timidly, absorbed in deep memory; at every glance her face expressed a recollection; she seemed to alternate between a vague dread and an unconquerable delight; she seemed like a dim sky filled with an inner radiance, but for a time it seemed uncertain which would prevail—sunlight, or shadow. But, like the sunlight, joy burst forth, scattering uncertainty and alarm, illuminating life from end to end; and her emotion vented itself in cries of April melody, and all the barren stage seemed in flower about her; she stood like a bird on a branch singing the spring time. And she sang every note with the same ease, each was equally round and clear, but what delighted Ulick was the perfect dramatic expression of her singing. It seemed to him that he was really listening to a very young girl who had just heard of the return of a man whom she had loved or might have loved. A bud last night slept close curled in virginal strictness, with the morning light it awoke a rose. But the core of the rose is still hidden from the light, only the outer leaves know it, and so Elizabeth is pure in her first aspiration; she rejoices as the lark rejoices in the sky, without desiring to possess the sky. Ulick could not explain to himself the obsession of this singing; he was thrall to the sensation of a staid German princess of the tenth century, and the wearing of a large hat with ostrich feathers,

and tied with a blue veil, hindered no whit of it. And the tailor-made dress and six years of *liaison* with Owen Asher was no let to the mediæval virgin formulated in antique custom. In the duet with Tannhäuser she was benign and forgiving, the divine penitent who, having no sins of her own to do penance for, does penance for the sins of others.

It was then that Ulick began to understand the secret of Evelyn's acting; in Elizabeth she had gone back to the Dulwich days before she knew Asher, and was acting what she then felt and thought. She believed she was living again with her father, and so intense was her conviction that it evoked the externals. Even her age vanished; she was but eighteen, a virgin whose sole reality has been her father and her *châtelaine*, and whose vision of the world was, till now, a mere decoration—sentinels on the drawbridge, hunters assembling on the hillside, pictures hardly more real to her than those she weaves on her tapestry loom.

Ulick leaned out of the box and applauded; he dared even to cry *encore*, and, following suit, the musicians laid aside their instruments and, standing up in the orchestra, applauded with him. The conductor tapped approval with his stick on the little harmonium, the chorus at the back cried *encore*. It was a curious scene; these folk, whose one idea at rehearsal is to get it over as soon as possible, conniving at their own retention in the theatre.

The applause of her fellow-artistes delighted her; she bowed to the orchestra, and turning to the chorus, said that she would be pleased to sing the duet again if they did not mind the delay; and coming down the

stage and standing in front of the box, she said to Ulick,—

“Well, are you satisfied? . . . Is that your idea of Elizabeth?”

“So far as we have gone, yes, but I shall not know if your Elizabeth is my Elizabeth until I have heard the end of the act.”

Turning to Mr. Hermann Goetze, she said,—

“Mr. Dean has very distinct ideas how this part should be played.”

“Mr. Dean,” answered the manager, laughing, “would not go to Bayreuth three years ago because they played ‘Tannhäuser.’ But one evening he took the score down to read the new music, and to his surprise he found that it was the old that interested him. Mr. Dean is always making discoveries; he discovers all my singers after he has heard them.”

“And Mr. Hermann Goetze discovers his singers before *he* has heard them,” cried Ulick.

Mr. Hermann Goetze looked for a moment as if he were going to get angry, but remembering that Dean was critic to an important weekly, he laughed and put his handkerchief to his jaw, and Evelyn went up the stage to meet the Landgrave—her father—and she sang a duet with him. As soon as it was concluded, the introduction to the march brought the first courtiers and pages on the stage, and with the first strains of the march the assembly, which had been invited to witness the competitions, was seated in the circular benches ranged round the throne of the Landgrave and his daughter.

Having consulted with his stage manager and super-



intended some alterations in the stage arrangements, Mr. Hermann Goetze, whose toothache seemed a little better again, left the stage, and coming into the box where Ulick was sitting, he sat beside him and affected some interest in his opinion regarding the grouping, for it had occurred to him that if Evelyn should take a fancy to this young man nothing was more likely than that she should ask to have his opera produced. With the plot and some of the music he was already vaguely acquainted; and he had gathered, in a general way, that Ulick Dean was considered to be a man of talent. The British public might demand a new opera, and there had been some talk of Celtic genius in the newspapers lately. Dean's "Grania" might make an admirable diversion in the Wagnerian repertoire—only it must not be too anti-Wagnerian. Mr. Goetze prided himself on being in the movement. Now, if Evelyn Innes would sing the title *rôle*, "Grania" was the very thing he wanted. And in such a frame of mind, he listened to Ulick Dean. He was glad that "Grania" was based on a legend; Wagner had shown that an opera could not be written except on a legendary basis. The Irish legends were just the thing the public was prepared to take an interest in. But there was one thing he feared—that there were no motives.

"Tell me more about the music? It is not like the opera you showed me a year or two ago in which instead of motives certain instruments introduce the characters? There is nothing Gregorian about this new work, is there?"

"Nothing," Ulick answered, smiling contemptuously—"nothing recognisable to uneducated ears."

“Plenty of chromatic writing?”

“Yes, I think I can assure you that there is plenty of modulation, some unresolved dissonances. I suppose that that is what you want. Alas, there are not many motives.”

“Ah!”

Ulick waited to be asked if he could not introduce some. But at that moment Tannhäuser's avowal of the joys he had experienced with Venus in Mount Horsel had shocked the Landgrave's pious court. The dames and the wives of the burgesses had hastened away, leaving their husbands to avenge the affront offered to their modesty. The knights drew their swords; it was the moment when Elizabeth runs down the steps of the throne and demands mercy from her father for the man she loves. The idea of this scene was very dear to Ulick, and his whole attention was fixed on Evelyn.

He was only attracted by essential ideas, and the mysterious expectancy of the virgin awaiting the approach of the man she loves was surely the essential spirit of life—the ultimate meaning of things. The comedy of existence, the habit of life worn in different ages of the world had no interest for him; it was the essential that he sought and wished to put upon the stage—the striving and yearning, and then the inevitable acceptance of the burden of life; in other words, the entrance into the life of resignation. That was what he sought in his own operas, and from this ideal he had never wavered; all other art but this essential art was indifferent to him. It was no longer the beautiful writing of Wagner's later works that attracted him; he deemed this one to be, perhaps, the finest, being the sincerest, and

“Parsifal” the worst, being the most hypocritical. Elizabeth was the essential penitent, she who does penance not for herself, she has committed no sin, but the sublime penitent who does penance for the sins of others. Not for a moment could he admit the penitence of Kundry. In her there was merely the external aspect. “Parsifal” was to Ulick a revolting hypocrisy, and Kundry the blot on Wagner’s life. In the first act she is a sort of wild witch, not very explicit to any intelligence that probes below the surface. In the second, she is a courtesan with black diamonds. In the third, she wears the coarse habit of a penitent, and her waist is tied with a cord; but her repentance goes no further than these exterior signs. She says no word, and Ulick could not accept the descriptive music as sufficient explanation of her repentance, even if it were sincere, which it was not, and he spoke derisively of the amorous cries to be heard at every moment in the orchestra, while she is dragging herself to Parsifal’s feet. Elizabeth’s prayer was to him a perfect expression of a penitent soul. Kundry, he pointed out, had no such prayer, and he derisively sang the cries of amorous desire. The character of Parsifal he could admit even less than the character of Kundry. As he would say in discussion, “If I am to discuss an artistic question, I must go to the very heart of it. Now, if we ask ourselves what Siegfried did, the answer is, that he forged the sword, killed the dragon and released Brunhilde. But if, in like manner, we ask ourselves what Parsifal did, is not the answer, that he killed a swan and refused a kiss and with many morbid, suggestive and disagreeable remarks? These are the facts,” he would say; “confuse them who may, explain them who

can!" And if it were urged, as it often was, that in Parsifal Wagner desired the very opposite to what he had in Siegfried, that Parsifal is opposed to Siegfried as Hamlet is opposed to Othello, Ulick eagerly accepted the challenge, and like one sure of his adversary's life, began the attack.

Wagner had been all his life dreaming of an opera with a subjective hero. Christ first and then Buddha had suggested themselves as likely subjects. He had gone so far as to make sketches for both heroes, but both subjects had been rejected as unpractical, and he had fallen back on a pretty mediæval myth, and had shot into a pretty mediæval myth all the material he had accumulated for the other dramas, whose heroes were veritable heroes, men who had accomplished great things, men who had preached great doctrines and whose lives were symbols of their doctrines. The result of pouring this old wine into the new bottle was to burst the bottle.

In neither Christ nor Buddha did the question of sex arise, and that was the reason that Wagner eventually rejected both. He was as full of sex—mysterious, subconscious sex—as Rossetti himself. In Christ's life there is the Magdalen, but how naturally harmonious, how implicit in the idea, are their relations, how concentric; but how excentric (using the word in its grammatical sense) are the relations of Parsifal to Kundry. . . . A redeemer is chaste, but he does not speak of his chastity nor does he think of it; he passes the question by. The figure of Christ is so noble, that whether God or man or both, it seems to us in harmony that the Magdalen should bathe his feet and wipe them

with her hair, but the introduction of the same incident into "Parsifal" revolts. As Parsifal merely killed a swan and refused to be kissed—the other preached a doctrine in which beauty and wisdom touch the highest point, and his life was an exemplification of his doctrine of non-resistance—"Take ye and eat, for this is my body, and this is my blood."

In "Parsifal" there was only the second act which he could admire without enormous reservations. The writing in the chorus of the "Flower Maidens" was, of course, irresistible—little cries, meaningless by themselves, but, when brought together, they created an enchanted garden, marvellous and seductive. But it was the duet that followed that compelled his admiration. Music hardly ever more than a recitative, hardly ever breaking into an air, and yet so beautiful! There the notes merely served to lift the words, to impregnate them with more terrible and subtle meaning; and the subdued harmonies enfolded them in an atmosphere, a sensual mood; and in this music we sink into depths of soul and float upon sullen and mysterious tides of life—those which roll beneath the phase of life which we call existence. But the vulgarly vaunted Good Friday music did not deceive him; at the second or third time of hearing he had perceived its insincerity. It was very beautiful music, but in such a situation sincerity was essential. The airs of this mock redeemer were truly unbearable, and the abjection of Kundry before this stuffed Christ revolted him. But the obtusely religious could not fail to be moved; the appeal of the chaste kiss, with little sexual cries all the while in the orchestra,

could not but stir the vulgar heart to infinite delight, and the art was so dexterously beautiful that the intelligent were deceived. The artiste and the vulgarian held each other's hands for the first time; they gasped a mutual wonder at their own perception and their unsuspected nobility of soul. "Parsifal," he declared, with true Celtic love of exaggeration, "to be the oiliest flattery ever poured down the open throat of a liquorish humanity."

As he spoke such sentences his face would light up with malicious humour, and he was so interested in the subject he discussed that his listener was forced to follow him. It was only in such moments of artistic discussion that his real soul floated up to the surface, and he, as it were, achieved himself. He knew, too, how to play with his listener, to wheedle and beguile him, for after a particularly aggressive phrase he would drop into a minor key, and his criticism would suddenly become serious and illuminative. To him "Parsifal" was a fresco, a decoration painted by a man whose true genius it was to reveal the most intimate secrets of the soul, to tell the enigmatic soul of longing as Leonardo da Vinci had done. But he had been led from the true path of his genius into the false one of a rivalry with Veronese. Only where Wagner is confiding a soul's secret is he interesting, and in "Tannhäuser," in this first flower of his dramatic and musical genius, he had perhaps told the story of his own soul more truly, more sincerely than elsewhere. To do that was the highest art. Sooner or later the sublimest imaginations pale before the simple telling of a personal truth, for the most

personal truth is likewise the most universal. "Tannhäuser" is the story of humanity, for what is the human story if it isn't the pursuit of an ideal?

And this essential and primal truth Evelyn revealed to him, and the very spirit and sense of maidenhood, the centre and receptacle of life, the mysterious secret of things, the awful moment when the whisper of the will to live is heard in matter, the will which there is no denying, the surrender of matter, the awaking of consciousness in things. And united to the eternal idea of generation, he perceived the congenital idea which in remotest time seems to have sprung from it—that life is sin and must be atoned for by prayer. Evelyn's interpretation revealed his deepest ideas to himself, and at last he seemed to stand at the heart of life.

Suddenly his rapture was broken through; the singer had stopped the orchestra.

"You have cut some of the music, I see," she said, addressing the conductor.

"Only the usual cut, Miss Innes."

"About twenty pages, I should think."

The conductor counted them.

"Eighteen."

"Miss Innes, that cut has been accepted everywhere—Munich, Berlin, Wiesbaden—everywhere except Bayreuth."

"But, Mr. Hermann Goetze, my agreement with you is that the operas I sing in are to be performed in their entirety."

"In their entirety; that is to say, well—taken literally, I suppose—that the phrase 'in their entirety' could be held to mean without cuts; but surely, regarding this

particular cut—I may say that I spoke to Sir Owen about it, and he agreed with me that it was impossible to get people into the theatre in London before half-past seven.”

“But, Mr. Hermann Goetze, your agreement is with me, not with Sir Owen Asher.”

“Quite so, Miss Innes, but—”

“If people don’t care sufficiently for art to dine half-an-hour earlier, they had better stay away.”

“But you see, Miss Innes, you’re not in the first act; there are the other artistes to consider. The ‘Venusberg’ will be sung to empty benches if you insist.”

It seemed for a moment as if Mr. Hermann Goetze was going to have his way; and Ulick, while praying that she might remain firm, recognised how adroitly Hermann Goetze had contrived to place her in a false position regarding her fellow artistes.

“I am quite willing to throw up the part; I can only sing the opera as it is written.”

The conductor suggested a less decisive cut to Evelyn, and Mr. Hermann Goetze walked up and down the stage, overtaken by toothache. His agony was so complete that Evelyn’s harshness yielded. She went to him, and, her hand laid commiseratingly on his arm, she begged him to go at once to the dentist.

Then some of the musicians said that they could hardly read the music, so effectually had they scratched it out.

“If the musicians cannot play the music, we had better go home,” said Evelyn.

“But the opera is announced for to-morrow night,” Mr. Hermann Goetze replied dolefully.



Mr. Wheeler suggested that they might go on with the rehearsal; the cut could be discussed afterwards. Groups formed, everyone had a different opinion. At last the conductor took up his stick and cried, "Number 105, please."

"They are going back," thought Ulick; "she held her ground capitally. She has more strength of character than I thought. But Hermann Goetze has upset her; she won't be able to sing."

And it was as he expected; she could not recapture her lost inspiration; mood, Ulick could see, was the foundation and the keystone of her art.

"No," she said, "I sang it horribly, I am all out of sorts, I don't feel what I am singing, and when the mood is not upon me, I am atrocious. What annoyed me was his attributing such selfishness to me, and such vulgar selfishness, too——"

"However, you had your way about the cut."

"Yes, they'll have to sing the whole of the finale. But I am sorry about his tooth; I know that it is dreadful pain."

Ulick told an amusing story how he had once called on Hermann Goetze to ask if he had read the book of his opera.

"He'd just gone into an adjoining room to fetch a clothes-brush—he had taken off his coat to brush it—but the moment he saw me, he whipped out his handkerchief and said that he must go to the dentist."

"And when I asked him to engage Helbrun to sing Brangäne, and give her eighty pounds a week if she wouldn't sing it for less, he whipped out his handkerchief as you say, and asked me if I knew a dentist."

"The idea of Wagner without cuts always brings on a violent attack," and Ulick imitated so well the expression of agony that had come into the manager's face that Evelyn exploded with laughter. She begged Ulick to desist.

"I sha'n't be able to sing at all. But I have not told you of my make-up. I don't look at all pretty; the ugly curls I wear come from an old German print, and the staid, modest gown. But it is very provoking; I was singing well till that fiend began to argue. Don't make me laugh again."

He became very grave.

"I can only think of the joy you gave me."

His praise brightened her face, and she listened.

"I cannot tell you now what I feel; perhaps I shall never find words to express what I feel about your Elizabeth. I shall be writing about it next week, and shall have to try."

"Do tell me now. You liked it better than my Margaret?"

Ulick shrugged his shoulders contemptuously, and they looked in each other's eyes, and could hardly speak, so extraordinary was their recognition of each other; it was so intense that they could hardly help laughing, so strange it seemed that they should never have met before, or should have been separated for such a long time. It really seemed to them as if they had known each other from all eternity.

"How can you act Elizabeth, she is so different from what you are?"

"Is she?"

Her pale blue eyes seemed to open a little wider,

and she looked at him searchingly. He could not keep back the words that rose to his tongue.

“You mean that your dead life now lives in Elizabeth.”

“Yes, I suppose that that is it.”

They asked each other whether any part of one's nature is ever really dead.

A few moments after the pilgrims were heard singing, and Evelyn would have to go on the stage. She pressed her hands against her forehead, ridding herself by an effort of will of her present individuality. The strenuous chant of the pilgrims grew louder, the procession approached, and as it passed across the stage Elizabeth sought for Tannhäuser, but he was not among them. So her last earthly hope has perished, and she throws herself on her knees at the foot of the wayside cross. And it was the anguish of her soul that called forth that high note, a G repeated three times; and it seemed to Ulick that she seemed to throw herself upon that note, that reiterated note, as if she would reach God's ears with it and force him to listen to her. In the religious, almost Gregorian, strain her voice was pure as a little child, but when she spoke of her renunciation and the music grew more chromatic, her voice filled with colour—her sex appeared in it; and when the music returned to the peace of the religious strain, her voice grew blanched and faded like a nuns' voice. Henceforth her life will be lived beyond this world, and as she walked up the stage, the flutes and clarionets seemed to lead her straight to God; they seemed to depict a narrow, shining path, shining and ascending till it disappeared amid the light of the stars.

“Well,” she said, “did I sing it to your satisfaction?”

"You're an astonishing artiste."

"No, that's just what I am not. I go on the stage and act; I couldn't tell you how I do it; I am conscious of no rule."

"And the music?"

"The music the same. I have often been told that I might act Shakespeare, but without music I could not express myself. Words without music would seem barren; I never try to sing, I try to express myself. But you'll see, my father won't think much of my singing. He'll compare me to mother, and always to my disadvantage. I cannot phrase like her."

"But you can; your phrasing is perfection. It is the very emotion—"

"Father won't think so; if he only thought well of my singing he would forgive me."

"How unaffected you are; in hearing you speak one hears your very soul."

"Do you? But tell me, is he very incensed? Shall I meet a face of stone?"

"He is incensed, no doubt, but he must forgive you. But every day's delay will make it more difficult."

"I know, I know."

"You cannot go to-morrow?"

"Why not?"

"To-morrow you sing this opera. Go on Saturday; you'll be sure to find him on Saturday afternoon. He has a rehearsal in the morning and will be at home about four in the afternoon."

As they walked through the scenery she said, "You'll come to see me," and she reminded him of his promise to go through the *Isolde* music with her.

"Mind, you have promised," she said as she got into her carriage.

"You'll not forget Saturday afternoon," he said as he shook hands.

She nodded and put up her umbrella, for it was beginning to rain.

## XVI.

EVELYN found Owen waiting for her. As soon as she came into the room he said, "Well, have you seen your father?"

She was not expecting him, and it was disagreeable to admit that she had not been to Dulwich. So she said that she had thought to find her father at St. Joseph's.

"But how did you know he was not at home if you did not go to Dulwich?"

"My gracious, Owen, how you do question me! Now, perhaps you would like to know which of the priests told me."

She walked to the window and stood with her left hand in the pocket of her jacket, and he feared that the irritation he had involuntarily caused her would interfere with his projects for the afternoon. There passed in his eyes that look of absorption in an object which marks the end of a long love affair—a look charged with remembrance, and wistful as an autumn day.

The earth has grown weary of the sun and turns herself into the shadow, eager for rest. The sun has been too ardent a lover. But the gaze of the sun upon the receding earth is fonder than his look when she raised herself to his bright face. So in Owen's autumn-

haunted eyes there was dread of the chances which he knew were accumulating against him—enemies, he divined, were gathering in the background; and how he might guard her, keep her for himself, became a daily inquisition. Nothing had happened to lead him to think that his possession was endangered, his fear proceeded from an instinct, which he could not subdue, that she was gliding from him; he wrestled with the intangible, and, striving to subordinate instinct to reason, he often refrained from kissing her; he imitated the indifference which in other times he could not dissimulate when the women who had really loved him besought him with tears. But there was no long gainsaying of the delight of telling her that he loved her, and when his aching heart forced him to question her regarding the truth of her feelings towards him, she merely told him that she loved him as much as ever, and the answer, instead of being a relief, was additional fuel upon the torturing flame of his uncertainty.

Ever since their rupture and reconciliation in Florence, their relations had been so uncertain that Owen often wondered if he were her lover. Whether the reason for these periods of restraint was virtue or indifference he could never be quite sure. He believed that she always retained her conscience, but he could not forget that her love had once been sufficient compensation for what she suffered from it. "The stage has not altered her," he thought, "time has but nourished her idiosyncrasies." He had been hoping for one of her sudden and violent returnings to her former self, but such a thing would not happen to-day, and hardly knowing what reply to make, he asked if she were free to come to look at some furni-

ture. She mentioned several engagements, adding that he had made her too many presents already.

She spoke of the rehearsal at considerable length, omitting, somehow, to speak of Ulick, and after lunch she seemed restless and proposed to go out at once.

As they drove off to see the Sheraton sideboard, he asked her if she had seen Ulick Dean. To her great annoyance she said she had not, and this falsehood spoilt her afternoon for her. She could not discover why she had told this lie. The memory rankled in her and continued to take her unaware. She was tempted to confess the truth to Owen; the very words she thought she should use rose up in her mind several times. "I told you a lie. I don't know why I did, for there was absolutely no reason why I should have said that I had not seen Ulick Dean." On Saturday the annoyance which this lie had caused in her was as keen as ever; and it was not until she had got into her carriage and was driving to Dulwich that her consciousness of it died in the importance of her interview with her father.

In comparing her present attitude of mind with that of last Thursday, she was glad to notice that to-day she could not think that her father would not forgive her. Her talk on the subject with Ulick had reassured her. He would not have been so insistent if he had not been sure that her father would forgive her in the end. But there would be recriminations, and at the very thought of them she felt her courage sink, and she asked herself why he should make her miserable if he was going to forgive her in the end. Her plans were to talk to him about his choir, and, if that did not succeed, to throw herself on her knees. She remembered how she had

thrown herself on her knees on the morning of the afternoon she had gone away. And since then she had thrown herself at his feet many times—every time she sang in the “Valkyrie.” The scene in which Wotan confides all his troubles and forebodings to Brunhilde had never been different from the long talks she and her father used to drop into in the dim evenings in Dulwich. She had cheered him when he came home depressed after a talk with the impossible Father Gordon, as she had since cheered Wotan in his deep brooding over the doom of the gods predicted by Wala, when the dusky foe of love should beget a son in hate. Wotan had always been her father; Palestrina, Walhalla, and the stupid Jesuits, what were they? She had often tried to work out the allegory. It never came out quite right, but she always felt sure in setting down Father Gordon as Alberich. The scene in the third act, when she throws herself at Wotan’s feet and begs his forgiveness (the music and the words together surged upon her brain), was the scene that now awaited her. She had at last come to this long-anticipated scene; and the fictitious scene she had acted as she was now going to act the real scene. True that Wotan forgave Brunhilde after putting her to sleep on the fire-surrounded rock, where she should remain till a pure hero should come to release her. A nervous smile curled her lip for a moment; she trembled in her very entrails, and as they passed down the long, mean streets of Camberwell her thoughts frittered out in all sorts of trivial observation and reflection. She wondered if the mother who called down the narrow alley had ever been in love, if she had ever deceived her husband, if her father had reproved



her about the young man she kept company with. The milkman presented to her strained mind some sort of problem, and the sight of the railway embankment told her she was nearing Dulwich. Then she saw the cedar at the top of the hill, whither she had once walked to meet Owen. . . . Now it was London nearly all the way to Dulwich.

But when they entered the familiar village street she was surprised at her dislike of it; even the chestnut trees, beautiful with white bloom, were distasteful to her, and life seemed contemptible beneath them. In Dulwich there was no surprise—life there was a sheeted phantom, it evoked a hundred dead Evelyns, and she felt she would rather live in any ghostly graveyard than in Dulwich. Her very knowledge of the place was an irritation to her, and she was pleased when she saw a house which had been built since she had been away. But every one of the fields she knew well, and the sight of every tree recalled a dead day, a dead event. That road to the right led to the picture gallery, and at the cross-roads she had been nearly run over by a waggon while trundling a hoop. But eyesight hardly helped her in Dulwich; she had only to think, to see it. The slates of a certain house told her that another minute would bring her to her father's door, and before the carriage turned the corner she foresaw the patch of black garden. But if her father were at home he might refuse to see her, and she was not certain if she should force her way past the servant or return home quietly. The entire dialogue of the scene between her and Margaret passed through her mind, and the very intonation

of their voices. But it was not Margaret who opened the door to her.

"This way, miss, please."

"No, I'll wait in the music-room."

"Mr. Innes won't have no one wait there in his absence. Will you come into the parlour?"

"No, I think I'll wait in the music-room. I'm Miss Innes; Mr. Innes is my father."

"What, miss, are you the great singer?"

"I suppose I am."

"Do you know, miss, something told me that you was. The moment I saw the carriage, I said, 'Here she is; this is her for certain.' Will you come this way, miss? I'll run and get the key."

"And who was it," Evelyn said, "that told you I was a singer?"

"Lor'! miss, didn't half Dulwich go to hear you sing at the opera?"

"Did you?"

"No, I didn't go, miss, but I heard Mr. Dean and your father talking of you. I've read about you in the papers; only this morning there was a long piece."

"If father talks of me he'll forgive me," thought Evelyn. The girl's wonderment made her smile, and she said,—

"But you've not told me your name."

"My name is Agnes, miss."

"Have you been long with my father? When I left, Margaret—"

"Ah! she's dead, miss. I came to your father the day after the funeral."

Evelyn walked up the room, overcome by the eternal absence of something which had hitherto been part of her life. For Margaret took her back to the time her mother was alive; farther back still—to the very beginning of her life. She had always reckoned on Margaret. . . . So Margaret was dead. Margaret would never know of this meeting. Margaret might have helped her. Poor Margaret! At that moment she caught sight of her mother's eyes. They seemed to watch her; she seemed to know all about Owen, and afraid of the haunting, reproving look, Evelyn studied the long oval face and the small brown eyes so unlike hers. One thing only she had inherited from her mother—her voice. She had certainly not inherited her conduct from her mother; her mother was one of the few great artistes against whom nothing could be said. Her mother was a good woman. . . . What did she think of her daughter? And seeing her cold, narrow face, she feared her mother would regard her conduct even more severely than her father. . . . "But if she had lived I should have had no occasion to go away with Owen." She wondered. At the bottom of her heart she knew that Owen was as much as anything else a necessity in her life. . . . She moved about the room and wished the hands of the clock could be advanced a couple of hours, for then the terrible scene with her father would be over. If he could only forgive her at once and not make her miserable with reproaches, they could have such a pleasant evening.

In this room her past life was blown about her like spray about a rock. She remembered the days when she went to London with her father to give lessons; the miserable winter when she lost her pupils. . . . How she

had waited in this room for her father to come back to dinner; the faintness of those hungry hours; worse still, that yearning for love. She must have died if she had not gone away. If it had to happen all over again she must act as she had acted. How well she remembered the moment when she felt that her life in Dulwich had become impossible. She was coming from the village where she had been paying some bills, and looking up she had suddenly seen the angle of a house and a bare tree, and she could still hear the voice which had spoken out of her very soul. "Shall I never get away from this place?" it had cried. "Shall I go on doing these daily tasks for ever?" The strange, vehement agony of the voice had frightened her. . . . At that moment her eyes were attracted by a sort of harpsichord. "One of father's experiments," she said, running her fingers over the keys. "A sort of cross between a harpsichord and a virginal; up here the intonation is that of a virginal."

"I forgot to ask you, miss"—Evelyn turned from the window, startled; it was Agnes who had come back—"if you was going to stop for dinner, for there's very little in the house, only a bit of cold beef. I should be ashamed to put it on the table, miss; I'm sure you couldn't eat it. Master don't think what he eats; he's always thinking of his music. I hope you aren't like that, miss?"

"So he doesn't eat much. How is my father looking, Agnes?"

"Middling, miss. He varies about a good bit; he's gone rather thin lately."

"Is he lonely, do you think . . . in the evenings?"

"No, miss; I don't hear him say nothing about being

lonely. For the last couple of years he never did more than come home to sleep and his meals, and he'd spend the evenings copying out the music."

"And off again early in the morning?"

"That's it, miss, with his music tied up in a brown paper parcel. Sometimes Mr. Dean comes and helps him to write the music."

"Ah! . . . but I'm sorry he doesn't eat better."

"He eats better when Mr. Dean's here. They has a nice little dinner together. Now he's taken up with that 'ere instrument, the harpy chord, they's making. He's comin' home to-night to finish it; he says he can't get it finished nohow—that they's always something more to do to it."

"I wonder if we could get a nice dinner for him this evening?"

"Well, miss, you see there's no shops to speak of about here. You know that as well as I do."

"I wonder what your cooking is like?"

"I don't know, miss; p'r'aps it wouldn't suit you, but I've been always praised for my cooking."

"I could send for some things; my coachman could fetch them from town."

"Then there's to-morrow to be thought about if you're stopping here. I tell you we don't keep much in the 'ouse."

"Is my father coming home to dinner?"

"I can't say for certain, miss, only that he said 'e'd be 'ome early to finish the harpy chord. 'E might have 'is dinner out and come 'ome directly after, but I shouldn't think that was likely."

"You can cook a chicken, Agnes?"

"Lor'! yes, miss."

"And a sole?"

"Yes, miss; but in ordering, miss, you must think of to-morrow. You won't like to have a nice dinner to-night and a bit of hashed mutton to-morrow."

"I'll order sufficient. You've got no wine, I suppose?"

"No, we've no wine, miss, only draught beer."

"I'll tell my coachman to go and fetch the things at once."

When she returned to the music-room, Agnes asked her if she was going to stop the night.

"Because I should have to get your rooms ready, miss."

"That I can't tell, Agnes. . . . I don't think so. . . . You won't tell my father I'm here when you let him in? . . . I want it to be a surprise."

"I won't say nothing, miss. I'll leave him to find it out."

Evelyn felt that the girl must have guessed her story, must have perceived in her the repentant daughter—the erring daughter returned home. Everything pointed to that fact. Well, it couldn't be helped if she had.

"If my father will only forgive me; if that first dreadful scene were only over, we could have an enchanting evening together."

She was too nervous to seek out a volume of Bach and let her fingers run over the keys; she played anything that came into her head, sometimes she stopped to listen. At last there came a knock, and her heart told her it was his. In another moment he would be in the room. But seeing her he stopped, and, without a word, he went to a table and began untying a parcel of music.

"Father, I've come to see you. . . . You don't an-

swer. Father, are you not going to speak to me? I've been longing to see you, and now—"

"If you had wanted to see me, you'd have come a month ago."

"I was not in London a month ago."

"Well, three weeks ago."

"I ought to have done so, but I had no courage. I could only see you looking at me as you are looking now. Forgive me, father. . . . I'm your only daughter; she's full of failings, but she has never ceased to love you."

He sat at the table fumbling with the string that had tied the parcel he had brought in, and she stood looking at him, unable to speak. She seemed to have said all there was to say, and wished she could throw herself at his feet; but she could not, something held her back. She prayed for tears, but her eyes remained dry; her mouth was dry, and a flame seemed to burn behind her eyes. She could only think that this might be the last time she would see him. The silence seemed a great while. She repeated her words, "I had not the courage to come before." At the sound of her voice she remembered that she must speak to him at once of his choir, and so take their thoughts from painful reminiscence.

"I went to St. Joseph's on Thursday, but you weren't there. You gave Vittoria's mass last Sunday. I started to go, but I had to turn back."

She had not gone to hear her father's choir, because she could not resist Lady Ascott's invitation, and no more than the invitation could she resist the lie; she had striven against it, but in spite of herself it had forced itself through her lips, and now her father seemed to have some inkling of the truth, for he said,—

“If you had cared to hear my choir you’d have gone. You needn’t have seen me, whereas I was obliged—”

Evelyn guessed that he had been to the opera. “How good of him to have gone to hear me,” she thought. She hated herself for having accepted Lady Ascott’s invitation, and the desire to ask him what he thought of her voice seemed to her an intolerable selfishness.

“What were you going to say, father?”

“Nothing. . . . I’m glad you didn’t come.”

“Wasn’t it well sung?” and she was seized with nervousness, and instead of speaking to him about his basses as she had intended, she asked him about the trebles.

“They are the worst part of the choir. That contrapuntal music can only be sung by those who can sing at sight. The piano has destroyed the modern ear. I dare say it has spoilt your ear.”

“My ear is all right, I think.”

“I hope it is better than your heart.”

Evelyn’s face grew quite still, as if it were frozen, and seeing the pain he had caused her he was moved to take her in his arms and forgive her straight away. He might have done so, but she turned, and passing her hand across her eyes she went to the harpsichord. She played one of the little Elizabethan songs, “John, come kiss me now.” Then an old French song tempted her voice by its very appropriateness to the situation—*“Que vous me coûte cher, mon cœur, pour vos plaisirs.”* But there was a knot in her throat, she could not sing, she could hardly speak. She endeavoured to lead her father into conversation, hoping he might forget her conduct until it was too late for him to withdraw into re-



sentment. She could see that the instrument she was playing on he had made himself. In some special intention it was filled with levers and stops, the use of which was not quite apparent to her; and she could see by the expression on his face that he was annoyed by her want of knowledge of the technicalities of the instrument.

So she purposely exaggerated her ignorance.

He fell into the trap and going to her he said, "You are not making use of the levers."

"Oh, am I not?" she said innocently. "What is this instrument—a virginal or a harpsichord?"

"It is a harpsichord, but the intonation is that of a virginal. I made it this winter. The volume of sound from the old harpsichord is not sufficient in a large theatre, that is why the harpsichord music in 'Don Juan' has to be played on the fiddles."

He stopped speaking and she pressed him in vain to explain the instrument. She went on playing.

"The levers," he said at last, "are above your knees. Raise your knees."

She pretended not to understand.

"Let me show you." He seated himself at the instrument. "You see the volume of sound I obtain, and all the while I do not alter the treble."

"Yes, yes, and the sonority of the instrument is double that of the old harpsichord. It would be heard all over Covent Garden."

She could see that the remark pleased him. "I'll sing 'Zerline' if you'll play it."

"You couldn't sing 'Zerline,' it isn't in your voice."

"You don't know what my voice is like."

"Evelyn, I wonder how you can expect me to forgive you; I wonder how I can speak to you. Have you forgotten how you went away leaving me to bear the shame, the disgrace?"

"I have come to beg forgiveness, not to excuse myself. But I wrote to you from Paris that I was going to live with Lady Duckle, and that you were to say that I had gone abroad to study singing."

"I'm astonished, Evelyn, that you can speak so lightly."

"I do not think lightly of my conduct, if you knew the miserable days it has cost me. Reproach me as you will about my neglect toward you, but as far as the world is concerned there has been no disgrace."

"You would have gone all the same; you only thought of yourself. Brought up as you have been, a Catholic—"

"My sins, father, lie between God and myself. What I come for is to beg forgiveness for the wrong I did you."

He did not answer, but he seemed to acquiesce, and it was a relief to her to feel that it was not the moral question that divided them; convention had forced him to lay some stress upon it, but clearly what rankled in his heart, and prevented him from taking her in his arms, was a jealous, purely human feud. This she felt she could throw herself against and overpower.

"Father, you must forgive me, we are all in all to each other; nothing can change that. Ever since mother's death—you remember when the nurse told us all was over—ever since I've felt that we were in some strange way dependent on each other. Our love for each other

is the one unalterable thing. My music you taught me; the first songs I sang were at your concerts, and now that we have both succeeded—you with Palestrina, and I with Wagner—we must needs be aliens. Father, can't you see that that can never be? if you don't you do not love me as I do you. You're still thinking that I left you. Of course, it was very wrong, but has that changed anything? Father, tell me, tell me, unless you want to kill me, that you do not believe that I love you less."

The wonder of the scene she was acting—she never admitted she acted; she lived through scenes, whether fictitious or real—quickenened in her; it was the long-expected scene, the scene in the third act of the 'Valkyrie' which she had always played while divining the true scene which she would be called upon to play one day. It seemed to her that she stood on the verge of all her future—the mystery of the abyss gathered behind her eyes; she threw herself at her father's feet, and the celebrated phrase, so plaintive, so full of intercession, broke from her lips, "Was the rebel act so full of shame that her rebellion is so shamefully scourged? Was my offence so deep in disgrace that thou dost plan so deep a disgrace for me? Was this my crime so dark with dishonour that it henceforth robs me of all honour? Oh tell me, father; look in mine eyes." She heard the swelling harmony, every chord, the note that gave her the note she was to sing. She was carried down like a drowning one into a dim world of sub-conscious being; and in this half life all that was most true in her seemed to rise like a star and shine forth, while all that was circumstantial and ephemeral seemed to fall away. She was

conscious of the purification of self; she seemed to see herself white and bowed and penitent. She experienced a great happiness in becoming humble and simple again. . . . But she did not know if the transformation which was taking place in her was an abiding or a passing thing. She knew she was expressing all that was most deep in her nature, and yet she had acted all that she now believed to be reality on the stage many times. It seemed as true then as it did now—more true; for she was less self-conscious in the fictitious than in the real scene.

She knelt at her father's or at Wotan's feet—she could not distinguish; all limitations had been razed. She was *the* daughter at *the* father's feet. She knelt like the Magdalen. The position had always been natural to her, and habit had made it inveterate; there she bemoaned the difficulties of life, the passion which had cast her down and which seemed to forbid her an ideal. She caught her father's hand and pressed it against her cheek. She knew she was doing these things, yet she could not do otherwise; tears fell upon his hand, and the grief she expressed was so intense that he could not restrain his tears. But if she raised her face and saw his tears, his position as a stern father was compromised! She could only think of her own grief; the grief and regret of many years absorbed her; she was so lost in it that she expected him to answer her in Wotan's own music; she even smiled in her grief at her expectation, and continued the music of her intercession. And it was not until he asked her why she was singing Wagner that she raised her face. That he should not know, jarred and spoilt the harmony of the scene as she had conceived

it, and it was not till he repeated his question that she told him.

"Because I've never sung it without thinking of you, father. That is why I sang it so well. I knew it all before. It tore at my heart-strings. I knew that one day it would come to this."

"So every time before was but a rehearsal."

She rose to her feet.

"Why are you so cruel? It is you who are acting, not I. I mean what I say—you don't. Why make me miserable? You know that you must forgive me. You can't put me out of doors, so what is the use in arguing about my faults? I am like that . . . you must take me as I am, and perhaps you would not have cared for me half as much if I had been different."

"Evelyn, how can you speak like that? You shock me very much."

She regretted her indiscretion, and feared she had raised the moral question; but the taunt that it was he and not she that was acting had sunk into his heart, and the truth of it overcame him. It was he who had been acting. He had pretended an anger which he did not feel, and it was quite true that, whatever she did, he could not really feel anger against her. She was shrined in his heart, the dream of his whole life. He could feel anger against himself, but not against her. She was right. He must forgive her, for how could he live without her? Into what dissimulation he had been foolishly ensnared? In these convictions which broke like rockets in his heart and brain, spreading a strange illumination in much darkness, he saw her beauty and sex idealised, and in the vision were the eyes and pallor of the dead

wife, and all the yearning and aspiration of his own life seemed reflected back in this fair, oval face, lit with luminous, eager eyes, and in the tangle of gold hair fallen about her ears, and thrown back hastily with long fingers; and the wonder of her sex in the world seemed to shed a light on distant horizons, and he understood the strangeness of the common event of father and daughter standing face to face, divided, or seemingly divided, by the mystery of the passion of which all things are made. His own sins were remembered. They fell like soft fire breaking in a dark sky, and his last sensation in the whirl of complex, diffused and passing sensations was the thrill of terror at the little while remaining to him wherein he might love her. A few years at most! His eyes told her what was happening in his heart, and with that beautiful movement of rapture so natural to her, she threw herself into his arms.

"I knew, father, dear, that you'd forgive me in the end. It was impossible to think of two like us living and dying in alienation. I should have killed myself, and you, dear, you would have died of grief. But I dreaded this first meeting. I had thought of it too much, and, as I told you, I had acted it so often."

"Have I been so severe with you, Evelyn, that you should dread me?"

"No, darling, but, of course, I've behaved—there's no use talking about it any more. But you could never have been really in doubt that a lover could ever change my love for you. Owen—I mustn't speak about him, only I wish you to understand that I've never ceased to think of you. I've never been really happy, and I'm sure you've been miserable about me often enough; but

now we may be happy. 'Winter storms wane in the winsome May.' You know the *Lied* in the first act of the 'Valkyrie'? And now that we're friends, I suppose you'll come and hear me. Tell me about your choir." She paused a moment, and then said, "My first thought was for you on landing in England. There was a train waiting at Victoria, but we'd had a bad crossing, and I felt so ill that I couldn't go. Next day I was nervous. I had not the courage, and he proposed that I should wait till I had sung Margaret. So much depended on the success of my first appearance. He was afraid that if I had had a scene with you I might break down."

"Wotan, you say, forgives Brunhilde, but doesn't he put her to sleep on a fire-surrounded rock?"

"He puts her to sleep on the rock, but it is she who asks for flames to protect her from the unworthy. Wotan grants her request, and Brunhilde throws herself enraptured into his arms. 'Let the coward shun Brunhilde's rock—for but one shall win the bride who is freer than I, the god!'"

"Oh, that's it, is it? Then with what flames shall I surround you?"

"I don't know, I've often wondered; the flame of a promise—a promise never to leave you again, father. I can promise no more."

"I want no other promise."

The eyes of the portrait were fixed on them, and they wondered what would be the words of the dead woman if she could speak.

Agnes announced that the coachman had returned.

"Father, I've lots of things to see to. I'm going to stop to dinner if you'll let me."

"I'm afraid, Evelyn—Agnes—"

"You need not trouble about the dinner—Agnes and I will see to that. We have made all necessary arrangements."

"Is that your carriage? . . . You've got a fine pair of horses. Well, one can't be Evelyn Innes for nothing. But if you're stopping to dinner, you'd better stop the night. I'm giving the 'Missa Brevis' to-morrow. I'm giving it in honour of Monsignor Mostyn. It was he who helped me to overcome Father Gordon."

"You shall tell me all about Monsignor after dinner."

He walked about the room, unwittingly singing the *Lied*, "Winter storms wane in the winsome May," and he stopped before the harpsichord, thinking he saw her still there. And his thoughts sailed on, vagrant as clouds in a spring breeze. She had come back, his most wonderful daughter had come back!

He turned from his wife's portrait, fearing the thought that her joy in their daughter's return might be sparer than his. But unpleasant thoughts fell from him, and happiness sang in his brain like spring-awakened water-courses, and the scent in his nostrils was of young leaves and flowers, and his very flesh was happy as the warm, loosening earth in spring. "'Winter storms,' " he sang, "'wane in the winsome May; with tender radiance sparkles the spring.' I must hear her sing that; I must hear her intercede at Wotan's feet!" His eyes filled with happy tears, and he put questions aside. She was coming to-morrow to hear his choir. And what would she think of it? A shadow passed across his face. If he had known she was coming, he'd have taken more trouble with those altos; he'd have kept them another hour. . . .



Then, taken with a sudden craving to see her, he went to the door and called to her.

“Evelyn.”

“Yes, father.”

“You are stopping to-night?”

“Yes, but I can’t stop to speak with you now—I’m busy with Agnes.”

She was deep in discussion with Agnes regarding the sole. Agnes thought she knew how to prepare it with bread crumbs, but both were equally uncertain how the melted butter was to be made. There was no cookery-book in the house, and it seemed as if the fish would have to be eaten with plain butter until it occurred to Agnes that she might borrow a cookery-book next door. It seemed to Evelyn that she had never seen a finer sole, so fat and firm; it really would be a pity if they did not succeed in making the melted butter. When Agnes came back with the book, Evelyn read out the directions, and was surprised how hard it was to understand. In the end it was Agnes who explained it to her. The chicken presented some difficulties. It was of an odd size, and Agnes was not sure whether it would take half-an-hour or three-quarters to cook. Evelyn studied the white bird, felt the cold, clammy flesh, and inclined to forty minutes. Agnes thought that would be enough if she could get her oven hot enough. She began by raking out the flues, and Evelyn had to stand back to avoid the soot. She stood, her eyes fixed on the fire, interested in the draught and the dissolution of every piece of coal in the flame. It seemed to Evelyn that the fire was drawing beautifully, and she appealed to Agnes, who only seemed fairly satisfied. It was doing

pretty well, but she had never liked that oven; one was never sure of it. Margaret used to put a piece of paper over the chicken to prevent it burning, but Agnes said there was no danger of it burning; the oven never could get hot enough for that. But the oven, as Agnes had said, was a tricky one, and when she took the chicken out to baste it, it seemed a little scorched. So Evelyn insisted on a piece of paper. Agnes said that it would delay the cooking of the chicken, and attributed the scorching to the quantity of coal which Miss Innes would keep adding. If she put any more on she would not be answerable that the chimney would not catch fire. Every seven or eight minutes the chicken was taken out to be basted. The bluey-whitey look of the flesh which Evelyn had disliked had disappeared; the chicken was acquiring a rich brown colour which she much admired, and if it had not been for Agnes, who told her the dinner would be delayed till eight o'clock, she would have had the chicken out every five minutes, so much did she enjoy pouring the rich, bubbling juice over the plump back.

“Father! Father, dinner is ready! I’ve got a sole and a chicken. The sole is a beauty; Agnes says she never saw a fresher one.”

“And where did all these things come from?”

“I sent my coachman for them. Now sit down and let me help you. I cooked the dinner myself.” Feeling that Agnes’s eye was upon her, she added, “Agnes and I—I helped Agnes. We made the melted butter from the receipt in the cookery-book next door. I do hope it is a success.”

“I see you’ve got champagne, too.”

"But I don't know how you're to get the bottle open, miss; we've no champagne nippers."

After some conjecturing the wires were twisted off with a kitchen fork. Evelyn kept her eyes on her father's plate, and begged to be allowed to help him again, and she delighted in filling up his glass with wine; and though she longed to ask him if he had been to hear her sing, she did not allude to herself, but induced him to talk of his victories over Father Gordon. This story of clerical jealousy and ignorance was intensely interesting to the old man, and she humoured him to the top of his bent.

"But it would all have come to nothing if it had not been for Monsignor Mostyn."

She fetched him his pipe and tobacco. "And who is Monsignor Mostyn?" she asked, dreading a long tale in which she could feel no interest at all. She watched him filling his pipe, working the tobacco down with his little finger nail. She thought she could see he was thinking of something different, and to her great joy he said,—

"Well, your Margaret is very good; better than I expected—I am speaking of the singing; of course, as acting it was superb."

"Oh, father! do tell me? So you went after all? I sent you a box and a stall, but you were in neither. In what part of the theatre were you?"

"In the upper boxes; I did not want to dress." She leaned across the table with brightening eyes. "For a dramatic soprano you sing that light music with extraordinary ease and fluency."

"Did I sing it as well as mother?"

"Oh, my dear, it was quite different. Your mother's art was in her phrasing and in the ideal appearance she presented."

"And didn't I present an ideal appearance?"

"It's like this, Evelyn. The Margaret of Gounod and his librettist is not a real person, but a sort of keepsake beauty who sings keepsake music. I assume that you don't think much of the music; brought up as you have been on the Old Masters, you couldn't. Well, the question is whether parts designed in such an intention should be played in the like intention, or if they should be made living creations of flesh and blood, worked up by the power of the actress into something as near to the Wagner ideal as possible. I admire your Margaret; it was a wonderful performance, but—"

"But what, father?"

"It made me wish to see you in Elizabeth and Brunhilde. I was very sorry I couldn't get to London last night."

"You'd like my Elizabeth better. Margaret is the only part of the old lot that I now sing. I daresay you're right. I'll limit myself for the future to the Wagner repertoire."

"I think you'd do well. Your genius is essentially in dramatic expression. 'Carmen,' for instance, is better as Galli Marié used to play it than as you would play it. 'Carmen' is a conventional type—all art is convention of one kind or another, and each demands its own interpretation. But I hope you don't sing that horrid music."

"You don't like 'Carmen'?"

Mr. Innes shrugged his shoulders contemptuously.

“‘Faust’ is better than that. Gounod follows—at a distance, of course—but he follows the tradition of Haydn and Mozart. ‘Carmen’ is merely Gounod and Wagner. I hope you’ve not forgotten my teaching; as I’ve always said, music ended with Beethoven and began again with Wagner.”

“Did you see Ulick Dean’s article?”

“Yes, he wrote to me last night about your Elizabeth. He says there never was anything heard like it on the stage.”

“Did he say that? Show me the letter. What else did he say?”

“It was only a note. I destroyed it. He just said what I told you. But he’s a bit mad about that opera. He’s been talking to me about it all the winter, saying that the character had never been acted; apparently it has been now. Though for my part I think Brunhilde or Isolde would suit you better.”

The mention of Isolde caused them to avoid looking at each other, and Evelyn asked her father to tell her about Ulick—how they became acquainted and how much they saw of each other. But to tell her when he made Ulick’s acquaintance would be to allude to the time when Evelyn left home. So his account of their friendship was cursory and perfunctory, and he asked Evelyn suddenly if Ulick had shown her his opera.

“Grania?”

“No, not ‘Grania.’ He has not finished ‘Grania,’ but ‘Connla and the Fairy Maiden.’ Written,” he added, “entirely on the old lines. Come into the music-room and you shall see.”

He took up the lamp; Evelyn called Agnes to get

another. The lamps were placed upon the harpsichord; she lighted some candles, and, just as in old times, they lost themselves in dreams and visions. This time it was in a faint Celtic haze; a vision of silver mist and distant mountain and mere. It was on the heights of Uisnech that Comla heard the fairy calling him to the Plain of Pleasure, Moy Mell, where Boadag is king. And King Cond, seeing his son about to be taken from him, summoned Coran the priest and bade him chant his spells toward the spot whence the fairy's voice was heard. The fairy could not resist the spell of the priest, but she threw Connla an apple and for a whole month he ate nothing but that. But as he ate, it grew again, and always kept whole. And all the while there grew within him a mighty yearning and longing after the maiden he had seen. And when the last day of the month of waiting came, Connla stood by the side of the king, his father, on the Plain of Aromin, and again he saw the maiden come towards him, and again she spoke to him,—

“’Tis no lofty seat on which Connla sits among short-lived mortals awaiting fearful death, but now the folk of life, the ever-living living ones, beg and bid thee come to Moy Mell, the Plain of Pleasure, for they have learnt to know thee.”

When Cond the king observed that since the maiden came Connla his son spake to none that spake to him, then Cond of the hundred fights said to him,—

“Is it to thy mind what the woman says, my son?”

“’Tis hard on me; I love my folk above all things, but a great longing seizes me for the maiden.”

“The waves of the ocean are not so strong as the waves of thy longing; come with me in my currah, the

straight gliding, the crystal boat, and we shall soon reach the Plain of Pleasure, where Boadag is king."

King Cond and all his court saw Connla spring into the boat, and he and the fairy maiden glided over the bright sea, towards the setting sun, away and away, and they were seen no more, nor did anyone know where they went to.

"My dear father, manuscript, and at sight, words and music!"

"Come—begin."

"Give me the chord."

He looked at her in astonishment.

"Won't you give me the keynote?"

"In the key of E flat," he answered sternly.

She began. "Is that right?"

"Yes, that's right. You see that you can still sing at sight. I don't suppose you find many prima donnas who can."

With her arm on his shoulder they sat together, playing and singing the music with which Ulick had interpreted the tale of "Connla and the Fairy Maiden."

"You see," he said, "he has invented a new system of orchestration; as a matter of fact, we worked it out together, but that's neither here nor there. In some respects it is not unlike Wagner; the vocal music is mostly recitative, but now and then there is nearly an air, and yet it isn't new, for it is how it would have been written about 1500. You see," he said, turning over the pages of the full score, "each character is allotted a different set of instruments as accompaniment; in this way you get astonishing colour contrasts. For instance, the priest is accompanied by a chest of six viols; *i. e.*,

two trebles, two tenors, two basses. King Cond is accompanied by a set of six cromornes, like the viols of various sizes. The Fairy Maiden has a set of six flutes or recorders, the smallest of which is eight inches long, the biggest quite six feet. Connla is accompanied by a group of oboes; and another character is allotted three lutes with an arch lute, another a pair of virginals, another a regal, another a set of six sackbuts and trumpets. See how all the instruments are used in the overture and in the dances, of which there are plenty, Pavans, Galliards, Allemaines. But look here, this is most important; even in the instrumental pieces the instruments are not to be mixed, as in modern orchestra, but used in groups, always distinct, like patches of colour in impressionist pictures."

"I like this," and she hummed through the fairy's luring of Connla to embark with her. "But I could not give an opinion of the orchestration without hearing it, it is all so new."

"We haven't succeeded yet in getting together sufficient old instruments to provide an orchestra."

"But, father, do you think such orchestration realisable in modern music? I see very little Wagner in it; it is more like Caccini or Monteverde. There can be very little real life in a parody."

"No, but it isn't parody, that's just what it isn't, for it is natural to him to write in this style. What he writes in the modern style is as common as anyone else. This is his natural language." In support of the validity of his argument that a return to the original sources of an art is possible without loss of originality, he instanced the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. The most beautiful pic-



tures, and the most original pictures Millais had ever painted were those that he painted while he was attempting to revive the methods of Van Eyck, and the language of Shakespeare was much more archaic than that of any of his contemporaries. "But explanations are useless. I tried to explain to Father Gordon that Palestrina was one of the greatest of musicians, but he never understood. Monsignor Mostyn and I understood each other at once. I said Palestrina, he said Vittoria—I don't know which suggested the immense advantage that a revival of the true music of the Catholic would be in making converts to Rome. You don't like Ulick's music; there's nothing more to be said."

"But I do like it, father. How impatient you are! And because I don't understand an entire æstheticism in five minutes, which you and Ulick Dean have been cooking for the last three years, I am a fool, quite as stupid as Father Gordon."

Mr. Innes laughed, and when he put his arm round her and kissed her she was happy again. The hours went lightly by as if enchanted, and it was midnight when he closed the harpsichord and they went upstairs. Neither spoke; they were thinking of the old times which apparently had come back to them. On the landing she said,—

"We've had a nice evening after all. Good-night, father. I know my room."

"Good-night," he said. "You'll find all your things; nothing has been changed."

Agnes had laid one of her old nightgowns on the bed, and there was her *prie-dieu*, and on the chest of drawers the score of Tristan which Owen had given her

six years ago. She had come back to sing it. How extraordinary it all was! She seemed to have drifted like a piece of seaweed; she lived in the present though it sank beneath her like a wave. The past she saw dimly, the future not at all; and sitting by her window she was moved by vague impulses towards infinity. She grew aware of her own littleness and the vastness overhead—that great unending enigma represented to her understanding by a tint of blue washed over by a milky tint. Owen had told her that there were twenty million suns in the milky way, and that around every one numerous planets revolved. This earth was but a small planet, and its sun a third-rate sun. On this speck of earth a being had awakened to a consciousness of the glittering riddle above his head, but he would die in the same ignorance of its meaning as a rabbit. The secret of the celestial plan she could never know. One day she would slip out of consciousness of it; life would never beckon her again; but the vast plan which she now perceived would continue to revolve, progressing towards an end which no man, though the world were to continue for a hundred million years, would ever know.

Her brain seemed to melt in the moonlight, and from the enigma of the skies her thoughts turned to the enigma of her own individuality. She was aware that she lived. She was aware that some things were right, that some things were wrong. She was aware of the strange fortune that had lured her, that had chosen her out of millions. What did it mean? It must mean something, just as those stars must mean something—but what?

Opposite to her window there was an open space; it

was full of mist and moonlight; the lights of a distant street looked across it. She too had said, "'Tis hard upon me, I love my folk above all things, but a great longing seizes me." That story is the story of human life. What is human life but a longing for something beyond us, for something we shall not attain? Again she wondered what her end must be. She must end somehow, and was it not strange that she could no more answer that simple question than she could the sublime question which the moon and stars propounded. . . . That breathless, glittering peace, was it not wonderful? It seemed to beckon and allure, and her soul yearned for that peace as Connla's had for the maiden. Death only could give that peace. Did the Fairy Maiden mean death? Did the plains of the Ever-Living, which the Fairy Maiden had promised Connla on the condition of his following her, lie behind those specks of light?

But what end should she choose for herself if the choice were left to her—to come back to Dulwich and live with her father? She might do that—but when her father died? Then she hoped that she might die. But she might outlive him for thirty years—Evelyn Innes, an old woman, talking to the few friends who came to see her, of the days when Wagner was triumphant, of her reading of "Isolde." Some such end as that would be hers. Or she might end as Lady Asher. She might, but she did not think she would. Owen seemed to think more of marriage now than he used to. He had always said they would be married when she retired from the stage. But why should she retire from the stage? If he had wanted to marry her he should have asked her at first. She did not know what she was

going to do. No one knew what they were going to do. They simply went on living. That moonlight was melting her brain away. She drew down the blinds, and she fell asleep thinking of her father's choir and the beautiful "Missa Brevis" which she was going to hear to-morrow.

## XVII.

As they went to church, he told her about Monsignor Mostyn. Evelyn remembered that the very day she went away, he had had an appointment with the prelate, and while trying to recall the words he had used at the time—how Monsignor believed that a revival of Palestrina would advance the Catholic cause in England—she heard her father say that no one except Monsignor could have succeeded in so difficult an enterprise as the reformation of church music in England.

The organ is a Protestant instrument, and in organ music the London churches do very well; the Protestant congregations are, musically, more enlightened; the flattest degradation is found among the English Catholics, and he instanced the Oratory as an extraordinary disgrace to a civilised country, relating how he had heard the great Mass of Pope Marcellus given there by an operatic choir of twenty singers. In the West-end are apathy and fashionable vulgarity, and it was at St. Joseph's, South-wark, that the Church had had restored to her all her own beautiful music. Monsignor had begun by coming forward with a subscription of one thousand pounds a year, and by such *largesse* he had confounded the in-

tractable Jesuits and vanquished Father Gordon. The poor man who had predicted ruin now viewed the magnificent congregation with a sullen face. "He has a nice voice, too, that's the strange part of it; I could have taught him, but he is too proud to admit he was wrong." However, *bon gré mal gré*, Father Gordon had had to submit to Monsignor. When Monsignor makes up his mind, things have to be done. If a thousand pounds had not been enough, he would have given two thousand pounds; Monsignor was rich, but he was also tactful, and did not rely entirely on his money. He had come to St. Joseph's with the Pope's written request in his hand that St. Joseph's should attempt a revival of the truly Catholic music, if sufficient money could be obtained for the choir. So there was no gainsaying, the Jesuits had had to submit, for if they had again objected to the expense, Monsignor would come forward with a subscription of two thousand a year. He could not have afforded to pay so much for more than a limited number of years, "but he and I felt that it was only necessary to start the thing for it to succeed."

Mr. Innes told his daughter of Monsignor's social influence; Monsignor had the command of any amount of money. There is always the money, the difficulty is to obtain the will that can direct the money. Monsignor was the will. He was all-powerful in Rome. He spent his winters and springs in Rome, and no one thought of going to Rome without calling on him. It was through him that the Pope kept in touch with the English Catholics. He had a confessional at St. Joseph's, and he was *au mieux* with the Jesuits. It was the influence of Monsignor that had given Palestrina his present vogue.

But a revival of Palestrina was in the air; through him the inevitable reaction against Wagner was making itself felt. Monsignor had made all the rich Catholics understand that it was their duty to support the unique experiment which some poor Jesuits in Southwark were making, and the fact that he had come forward with a subscription of one thousand a year enabled him to ask his friends for their money. He had told Mr. Innes that a dinner party which did not produce a subscriber he looked upon as a dinner wasted. Monsignor knew how to carry a thing through; his influence was extraordinary; he could get people to do what he wanted.

Evelyn and her father had so much to say that it did not seem as if they ever would find time to say it in. There was the story to tell of the construction of the vast choir and the difficulties he had experienced in teaching his singers to read at sight, for, as she knew, contrapuntal music cannot be sung except by singers who can sing unaccompanied. The trebles and the altos were of course the great difficulty; the boys often burst into tears; they said they preferred to die rather than endure his discipline. He was often sorry for them, for he knew that the perfect singing of this contrapuntal music was almost impossible except by *castrati*. But he was able to communicate his enthusiasm; he told them stories of how the ancient choirs used to sing Palestrina's masses without a rehearsal, how the ancient choirs used to compete one against the other, singing music they had never seen against men in the opposite organ loft whom they did not even know. He was full of such stories; they served to fire the boys' enthusiasm, and to change dislike into an inspiration. He had hypnotised

them into a love of Palestrina, and when they went home their parents had told him that the boys were always talking about the ancient music, and that they sat up at night reading motets. He had told them that they would abandon all foolish pastimes for Palestrina, and they had in a measure; instead of batting and bowling, their ambition became sight singing. Once a spirit of emulation is inspired, great things are accomplished. There had been some beautiful singing at St. Joseph's. Three months ago he believed that his choir would have compared with some of the sixteenth century choirs. Mr. Innes told an instructive story of how he had lost a most extraordinary treble, the best he had ever had. No, he had not lost his voice; a casual word had done the mischief. The boy had happened to tell his mother that Mr. Innes had said that he would give up cricket for Palestrina, and she, being a fool, had laughed at him. Her laughter had ruined the boy; he had refused to sing any more; he had become a dissipated young rascal, up to every mischief. Unfortunately, before he left he had influenced other boys; many had to be sent away as useless; and it was only now that his choir was beginning to recover from this egregious calamity. But though the difficulty of the trebles and the altos was always the difficulty of his choir, it no longer seemed insuperable. With the large amount of money at his disposal, he could afford to pay almost any amount of money for a good treble or alto, so every boy in London who showed signs of a voice was brought to him. But in three or four years a boy's voice breaks, and the task of finding another to take his place has to be undertaken. Very often this is impossible; there are times

when there are no voices. The present time was such a one, and he fumed at the foolish woman whose casual word had broken up his choir three months ago, bemoaning that such a calamity should have happened just before Monsignor's return from Rome. It was for that reason he was giving the "Missa Brevis," a small work easily done. He declared he would give fifty pounds to recall his choir of three months ago, just for Evelyn and Monsignor to hear it. Evelyn easily believed that he would, and as they parted inside the church she said,—

"I wish I could take the place of the naughty boy."

A look of hope came into his eyes, but it died away in an instant, and she watched his despondent back as he went towards the choir loft.

The influence of Monsignor had worked great changes at St. Joseph's—the very atmosphere of the church was different, the sensation was one of culture and refinement, instead of that of acrid poverty. From the altar rail to the middle of the aisle the church was crowded—in the free as well as in the paying parts. From the altar rails to the middle of the aisle there were chairs for the ease of the subscribers, and for those who were willing to pay a fee of two shillings. In front of each chair was a comfortable kneeling place, and slender, gloved hands held prayer-books bound in morocco, and under fashionable hats, filled with bright beads and shadowy feathers, veiled faces were bent in dainty prayer. Among these Evelyn picked out a number of her friends. There were Lady Ascott, who missed no musical entertainment of whatever kind, even when it took place in church, and Lady Gremaldin, who thought she was listening to



Wagner when she was thinking of the tenor whom she would take away to supper in her brougham after the performance. . . . Evelyn caught sight of a painter or two and a man of letters who used to come to her father's concerts. Suddenly she saw Ulick standing close by her; he had not seen her, and was looking for a seat. Catching sight of her, he came and sat in the chair next to hers. Almost at the same moment the acolytes led the procession from the sacristy. They were followed by the sub-deacon, the deacon and the priest who was to sing the Mass. When the Mass began the choir broke forth, singing the Introit.

The practice of singing in church proceeds from the idea that, in the exaltation of prayer, the soul, having reached the last limit obtainable by mere words, demands an extended expression, and finds it in song. The earliest form of music, the plain chant or Gregorian, is sung in unison, for it was intended to be sung by the whole congregation, but as only a few in every congregation are musicians, the idea of a choir could not fail to suggest itself; and, once the idea of a choir accepted, part writing followed, and the vocal masses of the sixteenth century were the result. Then the art of religious music had gone as far as it could, and the next step, the introduction of an accompanying instrument, was decadence.

The "Missa Brevis" is one of the most exquisite of the master's minor works. It is written for four voices, and with the large choir at his command, Mr. Innes was able to put eight to ten voices on a part; and hearing voices darting, voices soaring, voices floating, weaving an

audible embroidery, Evelyn felt the vanity of accompaniment instruments. Upon the ancient chant the new harmonies blossomed like roses on an old gnarled stem, and when on the ninth bar of the "Kyrie" the tenors softly separated from the sustained chord of the other parts, the effect was as of magic. Evelyn lifted her eyes and saw her dear father conducting with calm skill.

She had heard the Mass in Rome, and remembered the beautiful phrase which opens the "Kyrie" and which is the essence of the first part of that movement. But the altos had not the true alto quality; they were trebles singing in the lower register of their voices. Leaning towards her, Ulick whispered, "The altos are not quite in tune." She had heard nothing wrong, but, seeing that he was convinced, she resolved to submit the matter to her father's decision. She had every confidence in the accuracy of her ear; but last night her father had said that the modern musical ear was not nearly so fine as the ancient, trained to the exact intervals of the monochord, instead of the coarse approximation of the keyboard.

She remembered that when she had heard the Mass in Rome there was a moment when she had longed for the sweet concord of a pure third. Now, when it came at the end of the first note of the basses, Ulick said, "It is as sharp as that of an ordinary piano." It had not seemed so to her, and she wondered if her ear had deteriorated, if the corrupting influence of modern chromatic music had been too strong, if she had lost her ear in the Wagner drama. The coarse intonation was more obvious in the "Christe Eleison," sung by four solo voices, than in the "Kyrie," sung by the full choir;

and she did catch a slight equivocation, and the discovery tended to make her doubt Ulick's assertion that the altos were wrong in the "Kyrie," for, if she heard right in one place, why did she not hear right in another? The leading treble had a hard, unsympathetic voice, which did not suit the florid passages occurring three times on the second syllable of the word *Eleison*. He hammered them instead of singing them tenderly, with just the sense of a caress in the voice.

But outside of such extreme criticism, in the audience of the ordinary musical ear, the beautiful "*Missa Brevis*" was as well given as it could be given in modern times, and Evelyn was, of course, anxious to see the great prelate to whose energetic influence the revival of this music was owing, the man who had helped to make her dear father's life a satisfaction to him. It was just slipping into disappointment when the prelate had come to save it. This was why Evelyn was so interested in him—why she was already attracted toward him. It was for this reason she was sitting in one of the front chairs, near to where Monsignor would have to pass on his way to the pulpit. He was to preach that Sunday at St. Joseph's. . . . He passed close to her, and she had a clear view of his thin, hard, handsome face, dark in colour and severe as a piece of mediæval wood-carving; a head small and narrow across the temples, as if it had been squeezed. The eyes were bright brown, and fixed; the nose long and straight, with clear-cut nostrils. She noticed the thin, mobile mouth and the swift look in the keen eyes—in that look he seemed to gather an exact notion of the congregation he was about to address.

Already Evelyn trembled inwardly. The silence was quick with possibility; anything might happen—he might even publicly reprove her from the pulpit, and to strengthen her nerves against this influence, she compared the present tension to that which gathered her audience together as one man when the moment approached for her to come on the stage. All were listening, as if she were going to sing; it remained to be seen if the effect of his preaching equalled that of her singing. She was curious to see.

“I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.” In introducing this text he declared it to be one of the most beautiful and hopeful in Scripture. Was it the sweet, clear voice that lured the different minds and led them, as it were, in leash? Or was it that slow, deliberate, persuasive manner? Or was it the benedictive and essentially Christian creed which he preached that disengaged the weight from every soul, allowing each to breathe an easier and sweeter breath? To one and all it seemed as if they were listening to the voice of their own souls, rather than that of a living man whom they did not know, and who did not know them. The preacher’s voice and words were as the voices they heard speaking from the bottom of their souls in moments of strange collectedness. And as if aware of the spiritual life he had awakened, the preacher leaned over the pulpit and paused, as if watching the effect of his will upon the congregation. The hush trembled into intensity when he said, “Yes, and not only in heaven, but on earth as well, there shall be joy when a

sinner repents. This can be verified, not in public places where men seek wealth, fame and pleasure—there, there shall be only scorn and sneers—but in the sanctuary of every heart; there is no one, I take it, who has not at some moment repented.” Instantly Evelyn remembered Florence. Had her repentance there been a joy or a pain? She had not persevered. At that moment she heard the preacher ask if the most painful moments of our lives were the result of our having followed the doctrine of Jesus or the doctrine of the world? He instanced the gambler and the libertine, who willingly confess themselves unhappy, but who, he asked, ever heard of the good man saying he was unhappy? The tedium of life the good man never knows. Men have been known to regret the money they spent on themselves, but who has ever regretted the money he has spent in charity? But even success cannot save the gambler and libertine from the tedium of existence, and when the preacher said, “These men dare not be alone,” Evelyn thought of Owen, and of her constant efforts to keep him amused, distracted; and when the preacher said it was impossible for the sinner to abstract himself, to enter into his consciousness without hearing it reprove him, Evelyn thought of herself. The preacher made no distinctions; all men, he said, when they are sincere with themselves, are aware of the difference between good and evil living. When they listen the voice is always audible; even those who purposely close their ears often hear it. For this voice cannot be wholly silenced; it can be stifled for awhile, but it can be no more abolished than the sound of the sea from the shell. “As a shell, man is murmurous with morality.”

Of the rest of the sermon Evelyn heard very little. . . . It was the phrase that if we look into our lives we shall find that our most painful moments are due to our having followed the doctrine of the world instead of the doctrine of Christ that touched Evelyn. It seemed to explain things in herself which she had never understood. It told her why she was not happy. . . . Happy she had never been, and she had never understood why. Because she had been leading a life that was opposed to what she deemed to be essentially right. How very simple, and yet she had never quite apprehended it before; she had striven to close her ears, but she had never succeeded. Why? Because that whisper can be no more abolished than the murmur of the sea from the shell. How true! That murmur had never died out of her ears; she had been able to stifle it for awhile—she had never been able to abolish it—and what convincing proof this was of the existence of God!

Disprove it you couldn't, for it was part of one's senses—the very evidence on which the materials rely to prove that beyond this world there is nothing. Yet what a flagrant contradiction her conduct was to the murmur of spiritual existence. And that was why she was not happy. That was why she would never be happy till she reformed. . . . But the preacher spoke as if it were easy for all who wished it to change their lives. How was she to change her life? Her life was settled and determined for her ever since the day she went away with Owen. If she sent Owen away again the same thing would happen; she would take him back. She could not remain on the stage without a lover; she would take another before a month was out. It was no

use for her to deceive herself! That is what she would do. To sing *Isolde* and live a chaste life, she did not believe it to be possible—and she sat helpless, hearing vaguely the *Credo*, her attention so distracted that she was only half aware of its beauty. She noticed that the “*Et incarnatus est*” was inadequately rendered, but that she expected. It would require the strange, immortal voices she had heard in Rome. But the vigour with which the basses led the “*Et resurrexit*” was such that the other parts could not choose but follow. She felt thankful to them; they dissipated her painful personal reverie. Yes, the basses were the best part of the choir; among them she recognised two of her father’s oldest pupils; she had known them as boys singing alto—beautiful voices they had been, and were not less beautiful now. But if she desired to reform her life, how was she to begin? She knew what the priest would tell her. He would say, send away your lover; but to send him away in the plenitude of her success would be odious. He was unhappy; he was ill; he needed her sorely. His mother’s health was a great anxiety to him, and if, on the top of all, she were to announce that she intended leaving him, he would break down altogether. She owed everything to him. No, not even for the sake of her immortal soul would she do anything that would give him pain. But he had been anxious to marry her for some time. Would she make him a good wife? She was fond of him; she would do anything for him. She had travelled hundreds of miles to see him when he was ill, and the other night she could not sleep because she feared he was unhappy about his mother’s health. She would marry him if he asked her.

On that point she was certain. Refuse Owen? Not for anything that could be offered her; nothing would change her from that. Nothing! Her resolve was taken. No, it was not taken; it was there in her heart.

And at the moment when the Elevation bell rang she decided not only to accept Owen if he asked her, but to use all her influence to induce him to ask her. This seemed to her equivalent to a resolution to reform her life, and, happier in mind, she bowed her head, and as a very unworthy Catholic, but still a Catholic, and feeling no longer as an alien and an outcast, she assisted at the mystery of the Mass. She even ventured to offer up a vague prayer, and when the dread interval was over, she remembered that her father had spoken to her of the second "Agnus Dei" as an especially beautiful number. It was for five voices; exquisitely prayerful it seemed to her. With devout insistence the theme is reiterated by the two soprani, then the voices are woven together, and the simile that rose up in her mind was the pious image of fingers interlaced in prayer.

The first thrill, the first impression of the music over, she applied herself to the dissection of it, so that she might be able to discuss it with Ulick and her father afterwards. This beautiful melody, apparently so free, was so exquisitely contrived that it contained within itself descant and harmony. She knew it well; it is a strict canon in unison, and she had heard it sung by two grey-haired men in the Papal choir in Rome, soprano voices of a rarer and more radiant timbre than any woman's sexful voice, and subtle, and, in some complex way, hardly of the earth at all—voices in which no accent of sex transpired, abstract voices aloof from



any stress of passion, undistressed by any longing, even for God. They were not human voices, and, hearing them, Evelyn had imagined angels bearing tall lilies in their hands, standing on wan heights of celestial landscape, singing their clear silver music.

These men had sung this "Agnus Dei" as perhaps it never would be sung again, but she knew the boy treble to be incapable of singing this canon properly, so she could hardly resist the impulse to run up to the choir loft and tell her father breathlessly that she would take his place. She smiled at the consternation such an act would occasion. Even if she could get to the choir loft without being noticed, she could not sing this music, her voice was full of sex, and this music required the strange sexless timbre of the voices she had heard in Rome. But the boy sang better than she anticipated; his voice was wanting in strength and firmness; she listened, anxious to help him, perplexed that she could not.

The last Gospel was then read, and she followed Ulick out of church.

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## XVIII.

ON getting outside the church, they were surprised to find that it had been raining. The shower had laid the dust, freshened the air, and upon the sky there was a beautiful flowerlike bloom; the white clouds hung in the blue air uplifting fugitive palace and tower, and when Evelyn and Ulick looked into this mysterious cloudland, their hearts overflowed with an intense joy.

She opened her parasol, and told him that her father was lunching with the Jesuits. But he and she were going to dine together at Dowlands; and after dinner they were not to forget to practise the Bach sonata which was in the programme for the evening concert. She thought of the long day before them, and with mixed wonderment and pleasure of how much better they would know each other at the end of the day. She wanted to know how he thought and felt about things; and it seemed to her that he could tell her all that she yearned to know, though what this was she did not know herself.

There were strange hills and valleys and fabulous prospects in the great white cloud which hung at the end of the suburban street, and it seemed to her that she would like to wander with him there among the white dells, and to stand with him upon the high pinnacles. She was happy in an infinite cloudland while he told her of her father's struggle to obtain mastery in St. Joseph's. But she experienced a passing pang of regret that she

had not been present to witness the first struggles of the reformation.

She was interested in the part that Ulick had played in it. He told her how almost every week he had written an article developing some new phase of the subject, and Evelyn told him how her father had told her of the extraordinary ingenuity and energy with which he had continued the propaganda from week to week. When her father was called away to negotiate some financial difficulty, Ulick had taken charge of the rehearsals. Mr. Innes had told Evelyn that Ulick had displayed an unselfish devotion, and she added that he had been to her father what Liszt had been to Wagner, and while paying this compliment she looked at him in admiration, thanking him with her eyes. Had it not been for him, her father might have died of want of appreciation, killed by Father Gordon's obstinacy.

"But you came to him," she said, speaking unwillingly, "when I selfishly left him."

Ulick would not concede that he was worthy of any distinction in the victory of the old music; it would have achieved its legitimate triumph without his aid. He had merely done his duty like any private soldier in the ranks. But from first to last all had depended upon Monsignor. Mr. Innes had shown more energy and practical intelligence than anyone, not excepting Evelyn herself, would have credited him with; he had interested many people by his enthusiasm, but nevertheless he had remained what he was—a man of ideas rather than of practice, and without Monsignor the reformation would have come to naught. Evelyn was strangely interested to know what Ulick thought of Monsignor, and she waited

eagerly for him to speak. She would have liked to hear him enthusiastic, but he said that Monsignor was no more than an Oxford don with a taste for dogma and for a cardinal's hat. He was not a man of ideas, but a man that would do well in an election or a strike. He was what folk call "a leader of men," and Ulick held that power over the passing moment was a sign of inferiority. Shakespeare and Shelley and Blake had never participated in any movement; they were the movement itself, they were the centres of things. Christ, too, had failed to lead men, he was far too much above them; but St. Paul, the man of inferior ideas, had succeeded where Christ had failed. Mostyn, he maintained, was much more interested in dogma than in religion; he abhorred mysticism, and believed in organisation. He considered his Church from the point of view of a trades-union. An unspiritual man, one much more interested in theology than in God—an able shepherd with an instinct for lost sheep whose fixed and commonplace ideas gave him command over weak and exalted natures, natures which were frequently much more spiritual than his own. Evelyn listened, amused, though she could not think of Monsignor quite as Ulick did. Monsignor had said that if we ask ourselves to what our unhappiness is attributable, we find that it is attributable to having followed the way of the world instead of the way of Christ. It seemed to her impossible that a man of inferior intelligence such as Ulick described could think so clearly. She reminded Ulick of these very sentences which had so greatly moved her, and it flattered her to hear him admit it, that the idea which had so greatly struck her was penetrating and far-reaching, but he denied that it

was possible that it could be Monsignor's own. It was something he had got out of a book, and seeing the effect that could be made of it, he had introduced it into his sermon. In support of this opinion, he said that all the rest of the sermon was sententious commonplace about the soul, and obedience to the Church.

"But you will be able to judge for yourself. He is coming to the concert to-night."

"Then I must have a dress to wear, I suppose he would like me to wear sackcloth. But I am going to wear a pretty pink silk, which I hope you will like. Call that hansom, please."

It was amusing to watch her write the note, hear her explain to the cabman: if he brought back the right dress he was to get a sovereign. It was amusing to stroll on through the naked Sunday streets, talking of the music they had just heard and of Monsignor, to find suddenly that they had lost their way and could see no one to direct them. These little incidents served to enhance their happiness. They were nearly of the same age, and were conscious of it; a generation is but a large family, united by ties of impulse and idea. Evelyn had been brought up and had lived outside of the influence of her own generation. Now it was flashed upon her for the first time, and under the spell of its instincts she ran down the steps to the railway and jumped into the moving train. Owen would have forbidden her this little recklessness, but Ulick accepted it as natural, and they sat opposite each other, their thoughts lost in the rustle and confusion of their blood. She was conscious of a delicious inward throbbing, and she liked the smooth young face, the colour of old ivory, and the dark, fixed

eyes into which she could not look without trembling; they changed, lighting up and clouding as his thought came and went. She found an attraction in his occasional absent-mindedness, and wondered of what he was thinking. Looking into his eyes, she was aware of a mystery half understood, and she could not but feel that this enigma, this mystery, was essential to her. Her life seemed to depend upon it; she seemed to have come upon the secret at last.

It was amusing to walk home to dinner together this bright summer's day, and to tell this young man, to whose intervention it pleased her to think that she owed her reconciliation to her father, how it was by pretending not to understand the new harpsichord that she had inveigled her father into speaking to her. . . . But it was only one o'clock—an hour still remained before dinner would be ready at Dowlands, and they were glad to dream it under the delicious chestnut trees. She sat intent, moving the tiny bloom from side to side with her parasol, thinking of her father. Suddenly she told Ulick of the Wotan and Brunhilde scene, which she had always played, while thinking of the real scene that one day awaited her at her father's feet, and this scene she had at last acted, if you could call reality acting. She was dimly aware of the old Dulwich street, and that she had once trundled her hoop there, and the humble motion of life beneath the chestnut trees, the loitering of stout housewives and husbands in Sunday clothes, the spare figures of spinsters who lived in the damp houses which lay at the back of the choked gardens was accepted as a suitable background for her happiness. Her joy seemed to dilate in the morning, in the fluttering

sensation of the sunshine, of summer already begun in the distant fields. Inspired by the scene, Ulick began to hum the old English air, "Summer is a-coming in," and without raising her eyes from the chestnut blooms that fell incessantly on the pavement, Evelyn said,—

"That monk had a beautiful dream."

And for awhile they thought of that monk at Reading composing for his innocent recreation that beautiful piece of music; they hummed it together, thinking of his quiet monastery, and it seemed to them that it would be a beautiful thing if life were over, if it might pass away, as that monk's life had passed, in peace, in aspiration whether of prayer or of art. Thinking of the music she had heard over night, that she had hummed through and that her father had played on the harpsichord, she said,—

"And you, too, had a beautiful dream when you wrote 'Connla and the Fairy Maiden'?"

"Ah, your father showed it to you; you hadn't told me."

Then, absorbed in his idea, never speaking for effect, stripping himself of every adventitious pleasure in the service of his idea, he told her of the change that had come upon his æstheticism in the last year. He had been organist for three years at St. Patrick's, and since then had been interested in the modes, the abandoned modes in which the plain chant is written. These modes were the beginning of music, the original source; in them were written, no doubt, the songs and dances of the folk who died two, three, four, five thousand years ago, but none of this music has been preserved, only the religious chants of this distant period of art have come down to

us, and from this accident has sprung the belief that the early modes are only capable of expressing religious emotion. But the gayest rhythms can be written in these modes as easily as in the ordinary major and minor scales. It was thought, too, that the modes did not lend themselves to modulation, but by long study of them Ulick had discovered how they may be submitted to the science of modulation.

"I see," Evelyn replied pensively. "The first line written in one of the ancient modes, and underneath the melody, chromatic harmonies."

"No, that would be horrible," Ulick cried, like a dog whose tail has been trodden upon. "That is the infamous modern practice. I seek the harmony in the sentiment of the melody I am writing, in the tonality of the mode I am writing."

And then, little by little, they entered the perilous question of the ancient modes. There were several, and three were as distinctive and as rich sources of melody and harmony as the ordinary major scale, for modern music limited itself to the major scale, the minor scale being a dependency. The major and minor modes or scales had sufficed for two or three centuries of music, but the time of their exhaustion was approaching, and the musicians of the future would have to return to the older scales. He refused to admit that they did not lend themselves to modulation, and he answered, when Evelyn suggested that the introduction of a sharp or a flat was likely to alter the character of the ancient scales, that she must not judge the ancient scales by what had already been written in them; it was nowise his intention to imitate the character of the plain chant melodies;



she must not confuse the sentiment of these melodies with the modes in which they were written. It might be that in adding a sharp or a flat the musician destroyed the character of the mode which he was leaving and that of the mode he was passing into, but that proved nothing except his want of skill. His opera was written not only in the three ancient modes, but also in the ordinary major and minor scales, and he believed that he had enlarged the limits of musical expression.

He was not the first young man she had met with schemes for writing original music. So far as she was capable of judging, his practice was better than his theory. But his music was not the origin of her interest for him. What really interested her were his beliefs; her personal interest in him had really begun when he had said that he believed in a continuous revelation. Of this revelation he had argued that Christ was only a part. These ideas, which she heard for the first time, especially interested her. Owen's agnosticism had given her freedom and command of this world, but it had made a great loneliness in her life which Owen was no longer able to fill. Life seemed a desert without some form of belief, and notwithstanding her success, her life was often intolerably lonely. She had often thought of the world's flowers and fruits as mere semblance of things without true reality, and what seemed a bountiful garden, a mere hard, dry, brilliant desert. It was only at certain moments, of course, that she thought these things, but sometimes these thoughts quite unexpectedly came upon her, and she could no longer conceal from herself the fact that she was lonely in her soul, and that she was growing lonelier. She was wearying a

little of all the visible world, beginning to hunger for the invisible, from which she had closed her eyes so long, but which, for all that, had never become wholly darkened to her.

Hearing Ulick speak of foreseeing and divinations by the stars was too like sweet rain in a dying land; and as they returned to Dowlands, she spoke to him of Moy Mell where Bodag is king, of the Plain of the Ever-Living, of Connla and the Fairy Maiden gliding in the crystal boat over the Western Sea, and during dinner she longed to ask him if he believed in a future life.

It was difficult for her, who had never spoken on such subjects before, to disentangle his philosophy, and it was not until he said that we must not believe as religionists do, that one day the invisible shall become the visible, that she began to understand him. Such doctrine, he said, is paltry and materialistic, worthy of the theologian and the agnostic. We must rather, he said, seek to raise and purify our natures, so that we may see more of the spiritual element which resides in things, and which is visible to all in a greater or less degree as they put aside their grosser nature and attain step by step to a higher point of vision. She had always imagined there was nothing between the materialism of Owen and the theology of Monsignor. Ulick's ideas were quite new to her; they appealed to her imagination, and she thought she could listen for ever, and was disappointed when he reminded her that she must practise the Bach sonata for the evening's concert.

It did not, however, detain them long, for she found to her great pleasure that she had not lost nearly as much of her playing as she thought.

The evening lengthened out into long, clear hours and thoughts of the green lanes; and to escape from hauntings of Owen—the music-room it seemed still to hold echoes of his voice—she asked him to walk out with her. They wandered in the cloudless evening. They sauntered past the picture gallery, and the fact that she was walking with this strange and somewhat ambiguous young man provoked her to think of herself and him as a couple from that politely wanton assembly which had collected at eventide to watch a pavane danced beneath the beauty of a Renaissance colonnade, and to accentuate the resemblance Evelyn fluttered her parasol and said, pointing across the yellow meadows,—

“Look at those idle clouds, the afternoon is falling asleep.”

She walked for some time touched with the sentiment that the evening landscape inspired, a little uncertain whether he would like to talk further about his spiritual nature, and whether she should rest contented with what she knew on that subject. “It is only curiosity, but I wonder how he would make love—how he’d begin? I wonder if he cares for women?” It was some time before she could get Ulick to talk of himself; he seemed to strive to change the conversation back to artistic questions. He seemed absorbed in himself; it seemed difficult to awaken him out of his absent-mindedness. At last he spoke suddenly, as was his habit, and she learned that the scene of his first love-making was a beautiful Normandy park. He was more explicit about the park than the lady, and he seemed to lay special stress on the fact that the great saloon in the castle was hung with a faded tapestry. The story seemed to

Evelyn a little obscure, but she gathered that Ulick had been tragically separated from her, whether by the intervention of another woman or through his own fault did not seem clear. The story was vague as a legend, and Evelyn was not certain that Ulick had not invented the park and the tapestries of characteristic decorations of a love story as it should happen to him, if it did happen.

Love as a theme did not seem to suit him; he seemed to fade from her; he was only real when he spoke of his ideas, and a fleeting comparison between him and herself passed across her mind. She remembered that she was no longer truly herself except when speaking of sexual emotion. Everything else had begun to seem to her trivial, trite and uninteresting. She could no longer take an interest in ordinary topics of conversation. If a man was not going to make love to her, she soon began to lose interest. . . . A long sequence of possibilities rose in her mind, and died away in the distance like flights of birds. Suddenly she began to sing, and they had a long and interesting talk about her rendering of Isolde in the first act. For a moment the love potion seemed as if it would carry the conversation back to their individual experiences of the essential passion; but they drifted instead into a discussion regarding the practice of sorcery in the middle ages. She was surprised to learn that he was not only a believer, but was apparently an adept in all the esoteric arts. But the subject being quite new to her, she followed with difficulty his account of a very successful evocation of the spirit of a mediæval alchemist, a Fleming of the fourteenth century, and wonder often interrupted

her attention. She could not reconcile herself to the belief that he was serious in all he said, and he often spoke of the Kabbala, which apparently was the secret ritual of a sect of which he was a member, perhaps a priest. Between whiles she thought of the indignation with which Owen would hear such beliefs. Then tempted as by the edge of an abyss, she admired Ulick's strange appearance, which helped to make his story credible. She could no longer disbelieve, so simply did he tell his tales, his white teeth showing, and his dark eyes rapidly brightening and clouding as he mentioned different spells and their effects. But so illusive were his narratives that she never quite understood; he seemed always a little ahead of her; she often had to pause to consider his meaning, and when she had grasped it, he was speaking of something else, and she had missed the links. To understand him better she attempted to argue with him, and he told her of the incredible explanation that Charcot, the eminent hypnotist, had had to fall back upon in order to account materialistically for some of his hypnotic experiments, and she was forced to admit that the spiritualistic explanation was the easier to believe.

She was most interested when he spoke of the College of Adepts and the Rosicrucians. Life as he spoke seemed to become intense and exalted, and the invisible seemed on the point of becoming visible when he told her how the brotherhood greeted each other with, "Man is God, and son of God, and there is no God but man." He repeated all he could remember of their terrible oath. The College of Adepts, she learned, was the antithesis

of the monastery. The monastery is passive spirituality, the College of Adepts is active spirituality; the monastery abases itself before God, the Adepts seek to become as gods. "There is a spiritual stream," he said, "that flows behind the circumstance of history, and they claim that all religions are but vulgarisations of their doctrine. The Adept, by conquering passion and ignorance, attains a mastery over change, and so prolongs his life beyond any human limit."

She begged Ulick not to forget to bring the book of magic which contained the oath of the Rosicrucians.

It was now after eight, and they returned home, watching the white mists creeping up the blue fields. The sky was lucent as a crystal, and the purple would not die out of the west until nearly midnight. Evelyn would have liked to have strayed with him in the twilight, for as the landscape darkened, his strange figure grew symbolic, and his words, whether by beauty of verbal expression or the manner with which they were spoken, seemed to bring the unseen world nearer. The outside world seemed to slip back, to become subordinate as earth becomes subordinate to the sky when the stars come. Evelyn felt the life of the flesh in which Owen had placed her fall from her; it became dissipated; her life rose to the head, and looking into the mists she seemed to discover the life that haunts in the dark. It seemed to whisper and beckon her.

Her father was in the music-room when they returned, and at sight of him she forgot Ulick and his enchantments.

"Father, dear, I am so proud of you." Standing by

him, her hand on his shoulder, she said, "Your choir is wonderful, dear. Palestrina has been heard in London at last!"

She told him that she had heard the Mass in Rome, but had been disappointed in the papal choir, and she explained why she preferred his reading to that of the Roman musician. But he would not be consoled, and when he mentioned that the altos were out of tune, Ulick looked at Evelyn.

"Father, dear, Ulick and I have had an argument about the altos. He says they were wrong in the Kyrie. Were they?"

"Of course they were, but the piano has spoilt your ear. What was I saying last night?"

He took down a violin to test his daughter's ear, and the results of the examination were humiliating to her.

According to Mr. Innes, Bach was the last composer who had distinguished between A sharp and B flat. The very principle of Wagner's music is the identification of the two notes.

She ran out of the room, saying that she must change her dress, and Mr. Innes looked at Ulick interrogatively. He seemed a little confused, and hoped he had not hurt her feelings, and Ulick assured him that to-morrow she would tell the incident in the theatre, that she would be the first to see the humour of it. The news that she was staying at Dowlands, and the presumption that she would sing at the concert, had brought many a priest from St. Joseph's, and all the painters, men of letters, and designers of stained glass,

and all the old pupils, the viol players, and the madrigal singers, and when Evelyn came downstairs in her pink frock, she was surrounded by her old friends.

“Do come, girls; can you come on Thursday night? I’ll send you seats. It would be such a pleasure to me to sing to you, but not to-night; to-night I want to be like old times. I am going to play the viola da gamba.”

“But you used to sing Elizabethan songs in old times.”

“Yes, but father thinks I have lost my ear; I shall not sing to-night.”

Ulick laughed outright; the others looked at Evelyn amazed and a little perplexed, and the consumptive man who wore brown clothes and who had asked her to marry him came forward to congratulate her. But while talking to him, her eyes were attracted by the tall, spare ecclesiastic who stood talking to her father. She thought vaguely of Ulick’s depreciation. In spite of herself she felt herself gravitating towards him. Several times she nearly broke off the conversation with the consumptive man: her feet seemed to acquire a will of their own. But when her eyes and thought returned to the consumptive man, her heart filled with plaintive terror, for she could not help thinking of the little space he had to live, and how soon the earth would be over him. She met in his eyes a clear, plaintive look, in which she seemed to catch sight of his pathetic soul. She seemed to be aware of it, almost in contact with it, and through the eyes she divined the thought passing there, and it was painful to her to think that it was of



her health and success he was thinking. She could see how cruelly she reminded him of his folly in asking her to marry him, and she was quite sure that he was thinking now how very lucky for her it was that she had refused him. Pictures were formulating, she could see, in his poor mind of how different her life would have been in the home he had to offer her, and all this seemed to her so infinitely pathetic that she forgot Ulick, Monsignor and everything else. Her father called her.

“Evelyn,” he said, “let me introduce you to Monsignor.”

The sight of a priest always shocked her; the austere face and the reserved manner, the hard yet kind eyes, that appearance of frequentation of the other world, at least of the hither side of this, impressed her, and she trembled before him as she had trembled six years ago when she met Owen in the same room. And when the concert was over, when she lay in bed, she wondered. She asked herself how it was that a little ordinary conversation about church singing—Palestrina, plain chant, the papal choir, and the rest of it—should have impressed her so vividly, should have excited her so much that she could not get to sleep.

She remembered the discontent when it began to be perceived that she did not intend to sing, and how Julia had said, when it came to her to sing, that she did not dare. Julia had fixed her eyes on her, and then everyone seemed to be looking at her. The consumptive man was emboldened to demand “Elsa’s Dream,” but she had refused to sing for him. She was determined that no-

thing would induce her to sing that night, but suddenly Monsignor had said,—

“I hope you will not refuse to sing, Miss Innes. Remember that I cannot go to the opera to hear you.”

“If you wish to hear me, Monsignor, I shall be pleased indeed.”

It was impossible for her to refuse Monsignor; it was out of the question that she should refuse to sing for him. If he had wished it, she would have had to sing the whole evening. All that was quite true, but there seemed to be another reason which she could not define to herself. It had given her infinite pleasure to sing to Monsignor, a pleasure she had never experienced before, not at least for a very long while, and wondering what was about to happen, she fell asleep.

END OF VOL. I.

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